

**SPECIAL  
REPORT**

# THE LAST DAYS OF THE ABUSIVE COACH

BY ALEXANDER  
WOLFF / P. 50

SI.COM

SEPTEMBER 28, 2015

@SINOW

**WHAT'S  
WRONG WITH  
PEYTON?  
LESS THAN  
YOU THINK**

BY GREG A.  
BEDARD / P. 38

Ole Miss's ecstasy is reflected in the screams (and face guard) of Trae Elston, who had an interception in the Rebels' 43-37 victory.

**What Ole Miss's  
Repeat Shocker  
Of Alabama  
Tells Us About  
The Rebels . . .  
And the SEC**

# Re-Embrace The Mayhem

BY ANDY STAPLES

/ P. 46



*Ole Miss*





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# LINEUP

9.28.15

2015 | VOLUME 123 | NO. 12

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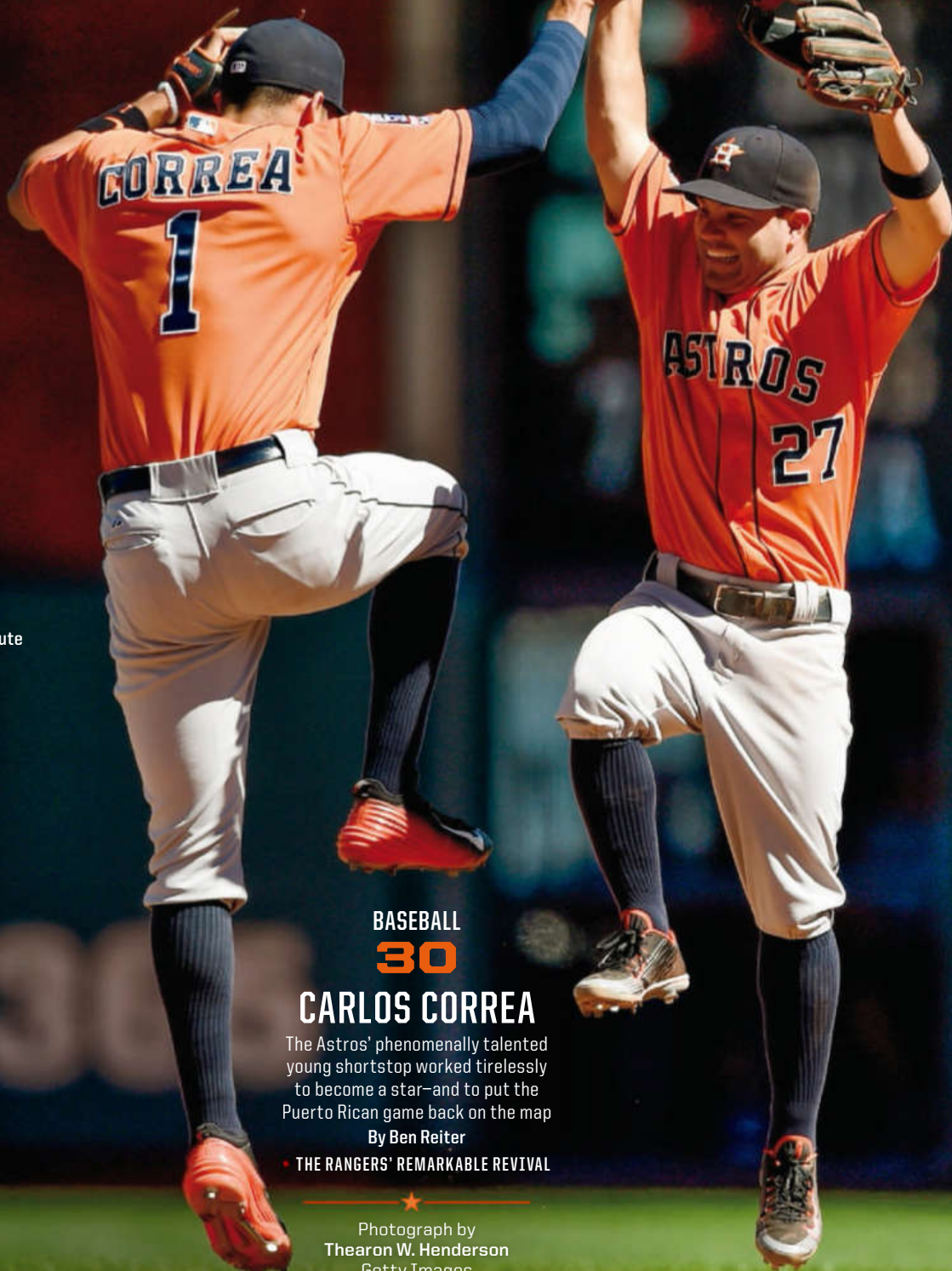
The Pope's Atlantic Division swing

On the cover:

Kevin C. Cox/Getty Images

### BIG JUMP

Correa and Jose Altuve (right) are lifting Houston to its first winning season since 2008.



### BASEBALL

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#### CARLOS CORREA

The Astros' phenomenally talented young shortstop worked tirelessly to become a star—and to put the Puerto Rican game back on the map

By Ben Reiter

• THE RANGERS' REMARKABLE REVIVAL

★  
Photograph by  
Thearon W. Henderson  
Getty Images

# Sports Illustrated





## ■ **WILLIE LANIER** The Chiefs Hall of Fame linebacker discusses his history with concussions and how players should adjust the way they play the game when returning from a head injury

**MAGGIE GRAY:** *You stay really involved with the league, especially with issues of player safety. You had a few concussions in your 11-year career. Did they change your approach to the game?*

**WILLIE LANIER:** Jerry Mays, who was a defensive lineman for the Chiefs, named me Contact my first year [1967] because I was tackling the way all of us had been taught: Put your head

between the numbers and make impact. But as you went from high school to college to the pros, the players you were tackling were bigger. Therefore the impact from a hit like that and the movement inside your skull was more dynamic. I ended up having an undetected subdural hematoma my first year. [After collapsing during a game against Houston] I was unconscious for

*"I ended up having an undetected subdural hematoma my first year."*

—Willie Lanier

two hours and then went to the Mayo Clinic for neurological tests. After they advised me, my name went from Contact to Honey Bear because I started to move my head to see what I was hitting and wrapped [the opponent] to make the play. That adjustment allowed me to play 10 more years without missing even a game. **MG:** *How can the game be made safer?*

**WL:** It's the decision a person makes on how to play the game that can reduce the risks. It doesn't take anything away from the game [to tackle properly]. Look at my history. I missed four games my first year and then maybe a half a game over the next 10 years. I use myself as an example and try to speak to those who will listen.

*For more of Lanier's interview, plus the SI Now archive, go to **SI.com/sinow***

## TUNE IN



▶ **EPISODE: SEPT. 14**

Dolphins WR Greg Jennings says any incident involving teammate Ndamukong Suh gets "magnified"



▶ **EPISODE: SEPT. 15**

Former Reds SS Barry Larkin discusses why Mets OF Yoenis Cespedes is an MVP candidate



▶ **EPISODE: SEPT. 16**

Should Brett Favre and Terrell Owens be first-ballot Hall of Famers?



▶ **EPISODE: SEPT. 17**

Former Chiefs kicker Jan Stenerud tells fans what to expect with the NFL's new PAT rules



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Leading  
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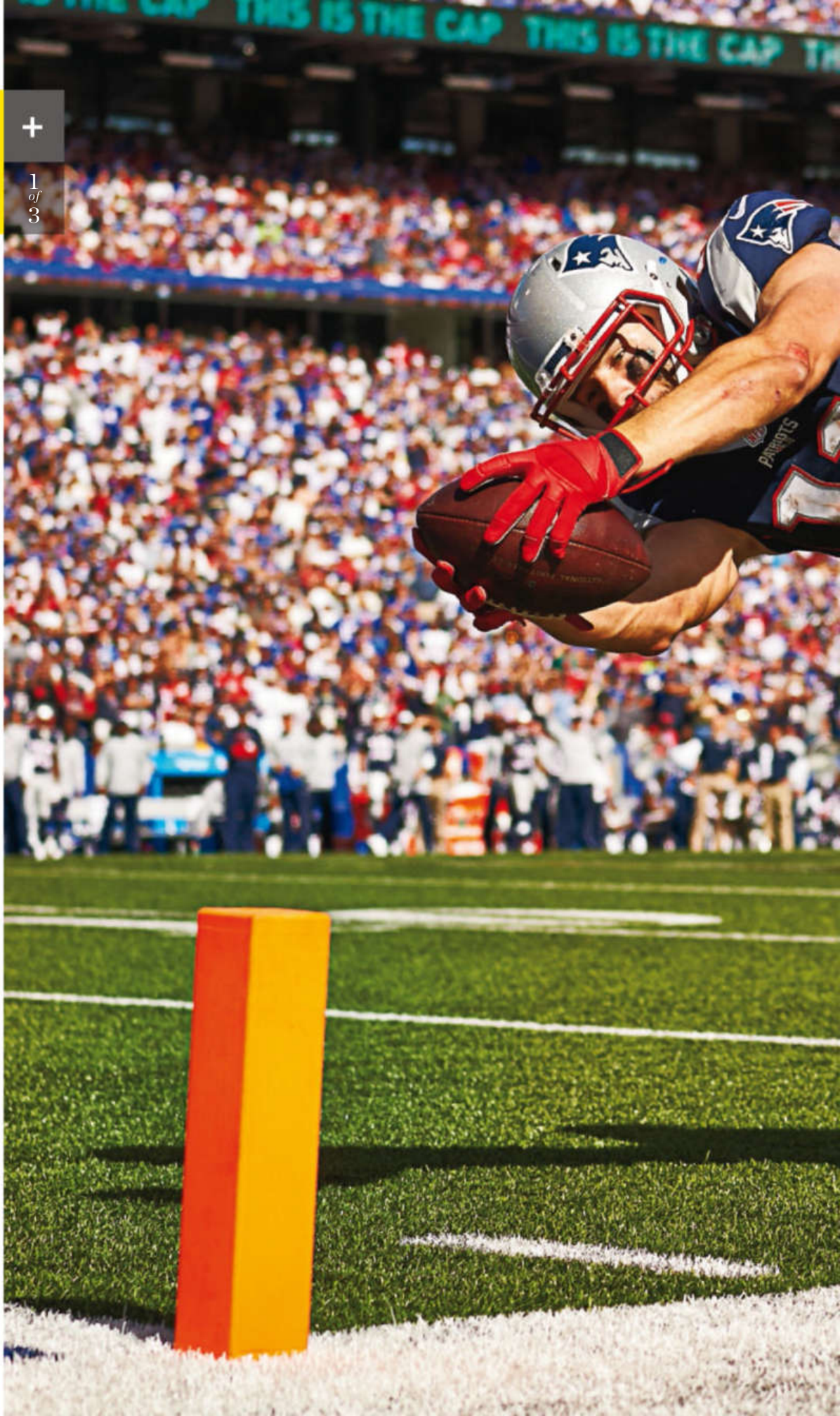


1  
of  
3

## Ride Receiver

■ Patriots wideout Julian Edelman made a *loooong* stretch for the pylon and took Bills strong safety Aaron Williams with him on Sunday during New England's 40-32 win at Buffalo. Edelman did reach pay dirt on this 22-yard catch for one of his two touchdowns, but the landing left Williams with an injured neck, and he was taken off the field on a stretcher. He was released from the hospital on Sunday night with stiffness and soreness.

PHOTOGRAPH BY  
**CARLOS M.  
SAAVEDRA**  
FOR SPORTS ILLUSTRATED











**Leading  
Off**

+

2  
of  
3

## Fournette, For Real

■ LSU sophomore running back Leonard Fournette—fired up by an Auburn defender’s comment that it “shouldn’t be difficult” to stop him—pounded for 228 yards and three touchdowns on just 19 carries in a 45-21 thrashing last Saturday at Baton Rouge. The 6'1", 230-pound Fournette raced 71 yards on his first touch and left with 4:14 remaining in the third quarter. It was his fourth game in a row with more than 140 yards, and the second straight time he has surpassed his career high.

PHOTOGRAPH BY  
**BRETT DUKE**  
NOLA.COM/THE TIMES-  
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HEART OF THE  
MARLEYS



YOUNG,  
GIFTED  
AND  
HOMELESS







**Sports Illustrated**

**FILMS**



**Leading  
Off**

## From Page to Screen

■ This week, **SPORTS ILLUSTRATED** launches **Sports Illustrated Films**, a series of original programming that brings SI's award-winning storytelling to video format. The first batch of mini-documentaries include *Brett Favre in Autumn*, *Heart of the Marleys* and *Young, Gifted and Homeless*.

CLOCKWISE FROM  
TOP LEFT:

PHOTOGRAPHS BY

**JEFFERY A. SALTER**

FOR **SPORTS ILLUSTRATED**

**MARK TUCKER**

FOR **SPORTS ILLUSTRATED**

**SIMON BRUTY**

FOR **SPORTS ILLUSTRATED**

***BRETT  
FAVRE IN  
AUTUMN***

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**Sports Illustrated  
Films** on this new  
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# INBOX

FOR SEPT. 14, 2015



While the excerpt from **Suzy Favor Hamilton's** book inspired a positive message about bipolar disorder diagnosis and acceptance, it missed a key point. When she writes that her self-described "new purpose" in life is to encourage others "to live for yourself," Favor Hamilton fails to acknowledge that living only for herself may have been a major contributor to her extreme difficulties and erratic lifestyle.

Dov Pinchot, Skokie, Ill.

On her supposed road to recovery, Favor Hamilton writes a salacious, tell-all book about her thrilling adventures as a Las Vegas prostitute, bringing further attention and humiliation to her family. And we are to believe this is all just an effort to help other people with bipolar disorder? Spare us.

Roger Booth, Rancho Palos Verdes, Calif.

## COVER

Isn't it interesting that in the same week you printed an article questioning the Patriots' tactics, the headsets of the visiting Steelers' coaches malfunction during the game? Coincidence?

Jim Lavold, Wauwatosa, Wis.



## SCORECARD P. 20

I found it curious that in the graphic explaining why average attendance is down at college football games, the survey did not include one obvious contributing factor: needing to study.

Dan Treber, Upland, Ind.

## SCORECARD P. 25

In making the case for a running back like LSU's **Leonard Fournette** for Heisman, you [like the record books] failed to include Barry Sanders's 222 rushing yards in the 1988 Holiday Bowl. His true Heisman season total was 2,850 yards.

Del Lemon, Austin, Texas



While looking at the LEADING OFF photo of BYU receiver **Mitch Mathews's** catching a winning TD pass against Nebraska, I wondered: When a Mormon school throws up a last-play prayer, is it called a Hail Joseph (Smith) instead of a Hail Mary?

John Tidd, Morrisville, Pa.



I was interested to read in the magazine that Scott Boras wants Mets ace **Matt Harvey** to be shut down after 180 innings. Unless I'm mistaken, I believe he is still agent Scott Boras, not *Dr. Scott Boras*.

Carl Allamanno, San Leandro, Calif.

## CONTACT SPORTS ILLUSTRATED

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**INSTRUMENTS FOR PROFESSIONALS™**

# SCORECARD

Edited by JIM GORANT + TED KEITH

## General Trump

Three decades before he shook up presidential politics, Donald Trump brought his signature style to another uniquely American institution: professional football

BY JACK DICKEY

**A CENTRAL ODDITY** of Donald Trump's campaign for the Republican presidential nomination is how little he has let it interfere with his traditional and impossible-to-delegate duties of being Donald Trump. His industriousness is admirable; he has seamlessly added feuds with fellow candidates Rand Paul and Carly Fiorina to ongoing ones with Rosie O'Donnell and Jon Stewart. So naturally Trump began a week that included a debate in California and speeches in three other states on the phone with a reporter talking about a spring football league that had folded nearly 30 years prior and disputing what an ESPN movie once said about him.

In 2009, ESPN ran a 30 for 30 documentary by Michael Tollin, a former filmmaker for the USFL, called *Small Potatoes: Who Killed the USFL?* The film left no doubt as to its director's opinion: It was Trump, the owner of the New Jersey Generals, who deep-sixed the league out of ambition and greed. What, in turn, does

the Republican front-runner make of Tollin? "I didn't even know him," Trump says. "But I guess he worked for us in some capacity. He was let go, and he had a real axe to grind. The guy's bad news. It was such a false report, such a stupid, false report."

Small potatoes, you say?

Trump insists that his entry into the USFL differed from his many other business deals. He builds luxury buildings; he doesn't bet long shots. He did it just this once: "I bought [the Generals] for peanuts. And I played the game for a little while. It was a shot in the dark. I knew that."

Trump purchased the team from Oklahoma oilman J. Walter Duncan and then-Generals-coach Chuck Fairbanks for a reported \$10 million (he has said he paid less than half that amount) in 1983, the same year Trump Tower opened on Fifth Avenue in Manhattan. The Generals played at Giants Stadium in New Jersey's Meadowlands, but they were an essential piece of The Donald's New York society debut. Back then he presented himself as a suave sportsman, boasting a self-forged war chest of indeterminate

Trump had ambitions far greater than winning a spring-football title or flipping his franchise for a few million dollars.



but surely fearsome size.

Dominance, whatever the price tag, was his aim. "When I went in, I said, 'Look, I will do this, and I'll go in and I'll do a good job because I do a good job at stuff,'" Trump says. "And I had a really good team. I had a team that would have been a really good NFL team."

From the moment Trump landed the Generals, he went about trying to build a juggernaut. He inherited Heisman Trophy-winning running back Herschel Walker, and that winter he signed former NFL MVP quarterback

LANE STEWART FOR SPORTS ILLUSTRATED





season, offering him an interest-free loan on the condition he would play in the USFL in '88, when his deal with New York was up. Taylor eventually got a new contract with the Giants that reportedly required him to pay Trump \$750,000 (Trump says it was a million) and repay the loan to get out of his Generals contract.

Trump says, "The reason I sold him back was something—it wasn't for the money. [It was] because I thought it was

always on *The NFL Today*, every Sunday," says Gould, who fondly recalls how he and Trump would "plot" ways to get stories about the league on the air. Leveraging the press to build his mythology became a Trump trademark.

"It sure as hell was amusing," says Tollin. "I remember being in his office, and he'd ask, 'Do you think Walt Michaels is a good coach? Do you think I should fire Walt Michaels?' He was kind of an open book. Whatever someone said last might stick."

The Generals went a combined 25–11 in 1984 and '85 but lost in the first round of the playoffs each year. What few outsiders realized at the time—but all would realize soon enough—was that Trump had ambitions that were far greater than winning a spring-football title or flipping his franchise for a few million dollars. He wanted the Jets and Giants to quiver before the Generals, and he wanted the USFL to buffalo its way into Pete Rozelle's league through a merger or to try its luck as a direct competitor.

Steve Ehrhart, who was then president of the USFL's Memphis Showboats and now runs the Liberty Bowl, says, "Donald was like the sun. He's got so much power and intensity that people just orbit him."

Says Trump now, "You have to understand, this is very important: I'm a big-picture guy, not a small-picture guy. And I went in [on the USFL] on the basis that the league would



Brian Sipe and three-time Pro Bowl safety Gary Barbaro. In 1985 he drafted another Heisman winner, quarterback Doug Flutie, and signed him to what was then reported to be the largest rookie contract in sports history, five years and \$7 million. And he hired former Jets coach Walt Michaels for that role after the Dolphins' Don Shula rebuffed him. (Shula, Trump said, had insisted on an apartment in Trump Tower as part of his compensation.)

Trump even signed Giants superstar Lawrence Taylor to a future contract before the 1984

unfair to Lawrence Taylor, to be honest. By the way, he then got a much better contract from the Giants. So I helped him a lot, and he's a great guy."

"We were trying to build America's team," says Jimmy Gould, an NFL player-agent who was then the Generals' president. (Gould likes to say he was Trump's first apprentice, having forced the developer to take his call by flying dry-ice ice cream, special from Cincinnati, to his secretaries. "You've put my office in total disarray. What can I do for you?" Trump said.) "We were

### Jersey Boys

Trump's ownership was marked by splashy moves like hiring ex-Jets coach Walt Michaels (left) and drafting Heisman Trophy winner Doug Flutie.

move to the fall. You know, I came up with a statement that if God wanted football to be played in the spring, he wouldn't have created baseball. Have you heard that before? That was originally from me. That was something I came up with a long time ago."

With Trump as the driving force, the spring league made plans to move, after the 1985 season, to the fall for '86, where it could, in theory, attract a more lucrative TV deal. The USFL had lost nearly \$200 million in its first three seasons.

Ehrhart says, "He didn't do it on his own. He was able to convince the other people to vote with him." A chunk of the electorate cheers, another shudders.

The cash-strapped league also brought an antitrust suit against the NFL and all its member clubs, except the Raiders. (Owner Al Davis testified on behalf of the USFL in exchange for not being sued.) The suit charged the NFL with conspiring against the USFL. The reasoning: because the NFL had TV contracts with all three networks, and because a Harvard Business School professor had once presented to NFL executives on how to vanquish the USFL, the NFL had created a monopoly on pro football and thus violated antitrust law. The USFL sought recompense of \$1.7 billion, knowing that without a major jury award the fall '86 season would never happen. The lawsuit had not been Trump's idea, but he did support it.

At the time Rozelle, who died in 1996, said publicly that a merger would never happen. But according to Trump the NFL commissioner had been

**According to Trump, Rozelle had been keen on a merger before the trial. "We were killing the NFL," Trump says. "They were ready to come to their knees."**



**Giant Plans**  
Trump made a move to get Taylor from the Giants, but the star linebacker never suited up for the USFL.

keen on a merger before the trial—until word got out about how much money some other USFL owners needed. "We were killing the NFL," says Trump. "They were ready to come to their knees. And then, you know, there were stories in different places that [some USFL owners were] running short and may not be able to play next week's games. And all of a sudden Pete Rozelle calls me, 'Well, let's meet in a couple of months, instead of next week.'"

The leagues would make their cases in the summer of 1986 in a trial in U.S. District Court in Manhattan. The jury sided with the USFL on the matter of fact but not damages; the NFL was indeed a monopoly, but it wound up paying the upstarts just \$3.76, including interest, plus

\$5.5 million in lawyers' fees. After multiple appeals were rejected, the USFL vanished.

Says Trump, "[The NFL] was judged a monopoly. We won. That was all we were claiming."

Trump's football interest outlived the league. In 2014 he even bid on the Buffalo Bills. He says he offered \$1 billion, all cash. Fracking magnate Terry Pegula landed the team instead for a reported \$1.4 billion. "I'm glad, because if I bought the Buffalo Bills, I probably would not be doing what I'm doing now, which is much more important," says Trump. "I would have done a good job with the team, but I wouldn't be doing what I'm doing now. So you understand. Now, that's today. I'm No. 1 in the polls. Ask me that question in two months; who knows, right?" □



## GO FIGURE

96

Completion percentage for Georgia QB Greyson Lambert in the No. 7 Bulldogs' 52-20 home win over South Carolina last Saturday. Lambert, a graduate transfer, was 24 for 25, breaking the NCAA record of 95.8% (23 of 24) held by Tennessee's Tee Martin (1998) and West Virginia's Geno Smith (2012).

50

Age of Rafael Palmeiro, who came out of retirement to go 2 for 4 with an RBI for the independent Sugar Land (Texas) Skeeters last Friday, and to play alongside his 25-year-old son, Patrick. Palmeiro had 3,020 hits in 20 MLB seasons.

15,744

Tim Wallach baseball cards owned by Corey Stackhouse, a 35-year-old attorney from Farmington, N.M., who is trying to collect every card ever made of Wallach, who played 17 years in the majors.

14th

Where Alexander Rossi finished in last Sunday's Singapore Grand Prix. Rossi, a native of Nevada City, Calif., is the first American to drive in a Formula One race since Scott Speed in 2007.

THEY SAID IT

**"I THINK MERRIL HOGE NEEDS TO WORRY ABOUT HIS BIG NECKTIES."**

**Johnny Manziel**

Browns quarterback, responding to the ESPN commentator's criticism.



SIGN OF THE APOCALYPSE

Last week **Alex Ovechkin** revealed that when he turned 30, on Sept. 17, he received a sheep as a gift.

**Jason Day**

He won the BMW, his fourth victory in his last six Tour starts, pushing him to No. 1 and ahead of all the other next Tigers.



**HOT** ▲  
**NOT** ▼



**South Africa**

Lost to Japan, which hadn't won a Rugby World Cup game since 1991. That's like Ole Miss beating Bama. Twice.

+ PRO-FILES

# Swing Shift

Former NFL QB Ron Jaworski has built a successful golf fiefdom through passion, hard work and knowing what players want

BY  
DAN GREENE

A SERIES  
FROM THE  
EDITORS OF  
**FORTUNE**  
AND  
**Sports Illustrated**



## FOR THOSE FAMILIAR

with Ron Jaworski's exuberant, wonkish NFL analysis on ESPN, it's easy to imagine him haunting the film room when he played, consuming game tape at ungodly hours. In truth, the quarterback known as Jaws spent his off days almost as concerned with par-4s as he was 3-4s. "I was away from the media, away from fans, away from talking about the game," he says of his weekly golf outings. "It was where I would recharge my batteries."

Jaworski is seated in a small conference room at Blue Heron Pines Golf Club in Egg Harbor City, N.J., where the same words that frame the back

entrance to the clubhouse are embroidered on his orange

polo: RON JAWORSKI

GOLF. Both setting and shirt are reminders that Jaworski's former refuge from work is now his job. With five courses in New Jersey and Pennsylvania,

Jaworski, a 64-year-old father of three who

lives in south Jersey with his wife, Liz, has brought the same dogged enthusiasm and eye for detail that characterize his NFL analysis to golf. "It's like he's still a quarterback reading the field," says Ken Kochenour, Jaworski's partner on four of the five courses. "He sees stuff other people don't see. It's uncanny."

Sometimes that means adding an alternate tee; other times, cutting trees to open up a fairway. It's all in the service of playability—one of the four pillars of Jaworski's approach, along with affordability (all of his courses cost less than \$100 per round at peak weekend times), atmosphere (each features a sports bar) and



a quick pace of play (which on-course rangers are not reluctant to enforce). The model is a crowd-pleaser: Jaworski says each of his courses pulls in six-figure annual profits. “I have never lost money on a golf course,” he says, knocking on the wooden table. “I say that proudly because I know a lot of people can’t.”

One of the keys to his enterprise is its economies of scale, which enable him to purchase everything from fertilizer to clubhouse food in bulk. This spring, after he bought Downingtown (Pa.) Country Club, Jaworski mobilized employees from across his other courses to upgrade Downingtown’s 50,000 square feet of notoriously hardpan bunkers. What would have cost more than \$110,000 through a contractor was done for \$18,000—the kind of efficiency that can be a difference maker in a competitive, seasonal industry. “Your margins are tight, and it can be thankless,” says Charlie Clarke, the company’s regional superintendent and a Jaworski employee for most of the past 25 years. “If you don’t love it, you really shouldn’t be out here.”

**JAWORSKI’S LOVE OF** the links can be traced to his upbringing in Lackawanna, N.Y., a lunch-pail community of 18,000 south of Buffalo. The son of a Bethlehem Steel mill worker, Jaws was no country club kid, but around age nine he became intrigued by South Park Golf Club, a nine-hole public course near his grade school. With balls scooped from beyond a driving-range fence and mixed bags of clubs, Ron and his friends began sneaking onto the course’s 2nd tee for scofflaw rounds. He was smitten.

**“It’s like he’s still a quarterback reading the field,” says one of Jaworski’s partners.**  
**“He sees stuff other people don’t see. It’s uncanny.”**



**Rare Bird**  
Jaworski was named UPI NFC Player of the Year in 1980, when he led Philly to the Super Bowl.

At 22, he bought a set of Wilson Staffs, his first real clubs. By then he was a second-round pick of the Los Angeles Rams, invited to play in a local celebrity tournament. He put the Wilsons to good use during his three years as a backup in L.A., frequenting courses from Long Beach to Las Vegas. But during his 18-hole escapes he felt a clock ticking. During one of his first years he heard a union rep cite a frightening statistic: The average player’s career lasted 3½ seasons. “I was scared to death of the future,” he says. “I realized how hard the game is and how dangerous it is.”

In 1977 he was traded to Philadelphia, where he found stability on and off the field. Coach Dick Vermeil installed

Jaworski as his starter, and in ’79, the season before he would lead the Eagles to their first Super Bowl, Jaws and linebacker John Bunting took over operations at The Abington Club in nearby Jenkintown, Pa. A phys-ed and recreation major at Youngstown (Ohio) State, Jaworski enjoyed his first real business experience enough to begin envisioning a second career.

Five years later he learned that a bankrupt course in southern New Jersey was available for sale. It would not come cheap: \$1.65 million, more than four times his salary of \$400,000. He rechristened the club Ron Jaworski’s Eagles’ Nest and set about cutting greens, raking traps and riding an F10 mower to trim the rough. “Once you put your own money in the deal,” he explains, “it’s amazing how quick you learn.”

As his NFL career wound down with late-1980s stints in Miami and Kansas City, Jaworski’s stable of courses grew. By the mid-1990s he owned a half dozen, whose value was growing during the Tiger-inspired boom. In ’98 a group of Wall Street investors approached Jaworski, who told them his properties weren’t for sale but he’d be willing to hear their offer. They responded with a bid of more than \$17 million. “I remember opening the letter, sitting with my wife,” Jaworski recalls. “And I said, ‘Well, I guess we’re out of the golf business.’”

The absence would be brief. After his noncompete clause expired in 2000, Jaworski bought Valleybrook Country Club in Blackwood, N.J., the charter entry in the new Ron Jaworski Golf portfolio. So ended a year of stewing in a generic business park and hitting the links. “I got a little squirrely,”



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says Jaworski, who's been as low as a five handicap but now holds a 6.6. "I was probably playing too much too."

**D**URING FOOTBALL season Jaworski enjoys no such indulgences. A typical week consists of Tuesday-through-Thursday film study at the NFL Films office in Mount Laurel, N.J.; a Friday of taping his *NFL Matchup* breakdowns; then Saturday through Monday at either a game site or at ESPN's Bristol, Conn., headquarters for more on-air segments. (From 2007 through '11 he was a colorman on *Monday Night Football*.) Jaws estimates that between the opening night and the Super Bowl he plays two or three rounds of golf. "ESPN owns me," he says. "And I love it."

Jaworski's football itch is as irrepressible as his attempts to scratch it. He's an co-majority owner of the Philadelphia Soul of the Arena Football League,

who won a championship in 2008 and reached their conference championship game this season, and a principal investor in the nascent China American Football League. The latter grew out of what Jaworski calls "one of the most bizarre things that has ever happened in my life." In 2012, Martin E. Judge, another part-owner of the Soul, talked over dinner about his recent business success in China. After a beer or two Jaworski suggested they try to bring football to the country; a few months later the two were in Tiananmen Square, hashing out a deal with China's secretary general. "I'm thinking, I'm this football player from Lackawanna, New York," Jaworski says. "You've got to pinch yourself."

The CAFL is scheduled to kick off next fall with eight teams and 20-player rosters, operating under Arena league rules in a number of Chinese Basketball Association facilities.

## SI.COM

To watch a video about Ron Jaworski and to see the entire Pro-Files video series, go to [SI.com/pro-files](http://SI.com/pro-files)

Jaworski has been bullish about a full-fledged league since a game featuring a mix of AFL stars and local athletes drew 8,000 fans. "It probably won't happen in my lifetime," he says, "but it's gonna happen."

He is upbeat too about Ron Jaworski Golf, which is now in the hands of his son, B.J., its executive vice president. Despite National Golf Foundation statistics indicating a net closure of 143½ courses in the U.S. in 2013, Jaworski sees women and children—often shunned or discouraged by snobbish country clubs but coveted at Jaworski's—as the sport's future. In December he expects to complete his second purchase of the year, Ramblewood Country Club in Mount Laurel. As the NFL season intensifies, he will be eyeing more courses still.

"The numbers are down—that's a reality," he says of the golf industry. "But they're not down for me." □

## The Jaws Portfolio

	▼ Blue Heron Pines Golf Club	Valleybrook Country Club	RiverWinds Golf Club	Downingtown Country Club	Running Deer Golf Club
Location	Egg Harbor City, N.J.	Blackwood, N.J.	West Deptford, N.J.	Downingtown, Pa.	Pittsgrrove, N.J.
Par	72	72	72	72	72
Yards	6,810	6,384	7,086	6,642	7,104
Rating / Slope	72.8 / 135	69.6 / 123	73.8 / 135	72.0 / 129	74.1 / 129





**Sports Illustrated**  
**HIGH SCHOOL**  
**ATHLETE OF THE MONTH**

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■ **WHEN KANE HOGAN**, a sophomore fullback at Danville (Ala.) High, was diagnosed last January with acute lymphocytic leukemia type-B, his first reaction was, "I can't play football, can I?" But Kane, who led the Hawks with 6.7 yards per carry last year, hasn't let cancer keep him from contributing to his team. Despite being in the midst of a punishing 120-week treatment, he attends all the games and practices he can, making an impact without ever stepping up to the line of scrimmage. "You can see it every time he walks into the locker room, there's an energy that comes over this team," says coach Josh LouAllen. Kane says being around his teammates gives him a lift too. "You go from playing Friday nights to an everyday battle against a terrible thing," he says. "[Football] helps me get my mind off of being sick." For more on Kane's story visit [SI.com/HSathlete](http://SI.com/HSathlete)



**Gable Dan Steveson** | *Apple Valley, Minn.* | *Wrestling*

Gable, a sophomore at Apple Valley High, defeated Khasanboy Rakhimov of Uzbekistan 9-0 to win the 220-pound freestyle gold medal at the cadet world championships in Sarajevo, Bosnia. In February he took the 3A state title at 220 pounds with a pin in the final match of the tournament, lifting the Eagles to a 10th straight title.



**Mary Pozzi** | *Salinas, Calif.* | *Auto Racing*

Pozzi, 59, drove a 1973 Chevy Camaro to win the classic American muscle traditional class at the Sports Car Club of America's Tire Rack Solo Nationals in Lincoln, Neb. The fourth woman to win an open class title in the competition's 43-year history, she was the fastest in both runs, finishing .653 of a second ahead of two-time Indy 500 winner Al Unser Jr.



**Teagan Stephenson** | *Urbana, Md.* | *Golf*

Teagan, a senior at Urbana High, shot a personal-best six-under 65 to lead the Hawks to a school-record 10-under 274 at Black Rock Golf Course in Hagerstown, for an eighth straight District I Class 3A-4A championship. In 2014, Teagan tied for first in the Capital Area Golf Tour's National Capital Junior Masters.

## FACES IN THE CROWD

Edited By **ALEXANDRA FENWICK**



**Alexa Hoover** | *Collegeville, Pa.* | *Field Hockey*

Hoover, a sophomore attacker at Penn, scored five goals in a 7-3 win over Saint Joseph's to break a 36-year-old school record. Through Sunday she led the nation in goals per game [2.50] and points [5.50]. Hoover was the Ivy League Rookie of the Year in 2014, when she had a league-high 14 goals and a team-high 31 points.



**Mike Coven** | *Duxbury, Mass.* | *Soccer*

Coven, 68, in his 43rd year at the helm of the men's soccer program at Division III Brandeis, guided the Judges to a 1-0 double-overtime win over Babson College for his 500th victory. The second-longest-tenured active coach in NCAA men's soccer, he is the 11th to reach the milestone. Coven had a 501-258-52 record at week's end.



**Ali Morallos** | *Lakewood, Calif.* | *Golf*

Ali, a junior at Wilson High in Long Beach, shot a one-under 37 to earn medalist honors in a 226-227 win over Huntington Beach High at Recreation Park Golf Course. The Bruins' low finisher in 11 of 12 matches this season, Ali fired a three-under 69 in the final round to win the AJGA title at Stonehenge Golf Club in Winona Lake, Ind., in July.

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# JUST MY TYPE

→ Interview by **DAN PATRICK**

**DAN PATRICK:** Do your kids [eight-year-old Ella and five-year-old Leo] appreciate seeing you race?

**JEFF GORDON:** The greatest experience I've ever had at the racetrack is when I won the Brickyard 400 last year. The kids were there. We got them to kiss the bricks. That was the ultimate. It probably helped me make the decision [to retire] this year.

**DP:** Do you want them to race?

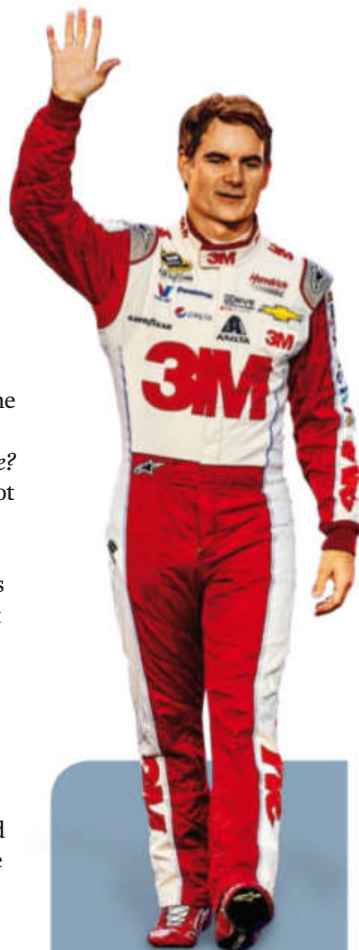
**JG:** Not necessarily. We've got a couple of quarter midgets, and my daughter has been driving [them] a little bit. As terrifying as it was that first time I saw her in a quarter midget, I'm not so sure I'm the parent who's cut out for it. But you can't be a part of our family or the NASCAR family and not have your kids be influenced by it. And we have one for my son if he wants to get in it someday, but certainly no pressure.

**DP:** What if your daughter said, "Dad, this is what I want to do"?

**JG:** I would introduce her to a whole lot of other things and make sure she's sure about it.

**DP:** What if she asked to talk to Danica Patrick about being a driver?

**JG:** Danica has influenced racing in so many ways, especially with girls. We had one of my daughter's classmates come to the Darlington race, and



JEFF GORDON

## NEAR THE FINISH

After 24 seasons in the number 24 car, the four-time Sprint Cup Series champion is ready to give his tired eyes a rest. He ranks 12th in the points standings with nine races remaining in the Chase for the Cup.

she just couldn't wait to see Danica. It's amazing the impact she's had.

**DP:** What's the first thing to go on a race car driver?

**JG:** Your eyesight.

**DP:** Do you have contacts?

**JG:** I don't. In first grade I had glasses. I was racing quarter midgets. The glasses were not working in the helmet. I put contacts in, but then my eyes were dried out and irritating me. I just stopped and haven't worn glasses or contacts ever since. It's worked for me all these years, but I'm not sure how much longer it will work.

**DP:** Will you miss going fast?

**JG:** No, just going fast has never been it for me. It's always been about going faster than the person you're racing and pushing the limits of your car to find out how you can go one-hundredth of a second faster. It's more the competition.

**DP:** How many number 24 tattoos have you seen through the years?

**JG:** More than I could have ever imagined.

**DP:** Is there an odd one that stands out?

**JG:** Oh, yeah. There's a woman who has about three different paint schemes of my race car down her back. It's extensive.

**DP:** Does this woman love you more than your wife [Ingrid]?

**JG:** [Laughs.] In a different way, yes.

**DP:** Does your wife have a number 24 tattoo?

**JG:** No, thank God. □

## GUEST SHOTS SAY WHAT?



Oregon senior QB  
**Vernon Adams**

discussed the transition from Eastern Washington of the FCS to the FBS Ducks, who regularly face formidable defenses. "Those guys are big and fast," Adams said. "I got sacked on the third series against [Michigan State] and said, 'Oh, yeah, these boys are big.'" ... Former NFL quarterback **Brady**



**Quinn** told me he didn't wear tight

jerseys just to show off his guns: "You don't want to have a loose-hanging shirt. It's not aerodynamic. You're trying to whip the ball around, and you've got all that drag." ... Oklahoma junior quarterback **Baker Mayfield** likes



that his girlfriend, former

Oklahoma State soccer player Baillie Burmaster, hasn't jumped on the Sooners' bandwagon. "She keeps it real," Mayfield said. "She'll be there on the sideline in [OSU] orange when we play them."

## BIG BOARD

## COLLEGE FOOTBALL

+  
Long Arm of the Paw

Clemson will gun for more than an ACC title if Deshaun Watson stays healthy

BY ANDY STAPLES

A FEW ribbon boards flickered in Clemson's Memorial Stadium on a Friday night in January 2014, but otherwise Death Valley was mostly dead. Tigers coaches were busy with official visitors they hoped would help fill out the remaining spots in their recruiting class, while the majority of Clemson's players prepared to do the things college students do on a Friday night.

On the field two figures moved in near silence. They would consult a binder periodically, then move again. The smaller figure was Artavis Scott, then a freshman receiver. The larger one was the quarterback who coaches believed might finally bring the Tigers back to national-title contention. Deshaun Watson, an early enrollee from Gainesville (Ga.) High, had been on campus only a few weeks, but he and his roommate were already planning a takeover of the offense. "We were just trying to make sure we got every detail of the playbook

down," Watson says. As they worked, they imagined how the cavernous stadium would feel filled with 81,500 screaming people and rival South Carolina across the line.

Watson doesn't have to imagine anymore. He assumed the starting job in the fourth game last year, and now he hopes to lead Clemson to its first ACC title since 2011. Last Thursday he led his team to 3-0 by running for 54 yards and passing for 199 yards and two touchdowns in a 20-17 win at Louisville. If Watson can stay healthy—which didn't happen last season—a conference title could be just the beginning.

**WHEN CLEMSON** co-offensive coordinator Jeff Scott was in middle school, his father, Brad, was Florida State's offensive coordinator, and Brad had a special quarterback. The inner confidence that Scott saw in 1993 Heisman Trophy winner and national champion Charlie Ward strikes him as eerily similar

## SI.COM

For an exclusive video feature on Deshaun Watson, or to watch any of the Rising Stars series presented by Symetra, go to [SI.com/RisingStars](http://SI.com/RisingStars)





to what he perceives in Watson.

Watson started as a freshman at Gainesville High and led his team to a 10–2 record. When he attended a football camp at Clemson that summer, Watson had already reached his full 6' 2" height, and his arm and his mind were developed beyond his years. Chad Morris, Clemson's offensive coordinator at the time, was so taken that he made it his mission to ensure the young QB wore a paw on his helmet in college. As a kid, Watson had loved Urban Meyer's Florida teams—he wanted to go “from Gainesville to Gainesville,” he says—but by the time Clemson began recruiting Watson, Meyer had resigned at Florida and wouldn't take the Ohio State job for another six months. Besides, Watson's mother, Deann, loved Morris and Tigers coach Dabo Swinney. Though Watson was in the recruiting class of 2014, he committed to Clemson on National Signing Day in '12.

“Sometimes when you get started with a recruit so early, you can become the old girlfriend when the new schools start calling,” says Scott, who was then Clemson's receivers coach and recruiting coordinator. But Watson never wavered, which reinforced the staff's belief they had landed a special player.

**THAT FEELING** deepened during spring practice in 2014. “Typically a five-star freshman comes in, and it doesn't go as easy as he or everybody else thinks it's going to go,” Scott says. “The thing that stood out with Deshaun was the game was really slow for him.”

After cameos against Georgia and South Carolina State, Watson replaced starter Cole Stoudt with his team trailing 3–0 at Florida State. He completed 19 of 28 throws for 266 yards

while running for another 36 yards and a score to nearly pull off the upset. “It felt like a movie,” Watson says of the 23–17 loss. “Everything was in slow motion.”

Swinney made Watson the starter the next week, and the freshman responded with a school-record six touchdown passes in a 50–35 win over North Carolina. He followed that by throwing two TDs and running for two more in a 41–0 rout of N.C. State. Says Wolfpack coach Dave Doeren, “He demolished us.”

But Watson broke a bone in his right hand the next week, against Louisville. And when he returned after a three-game absence to face Georgia Tech, he promptly sprained the LCL in his left knee, departing the 28–6 loss in the first quarter. Back at practice five days later, Watson tore his ACL. It turned out he'd had untreated ligament damage dating to high school. By then only one game remained, against South Carolina. Team doctors said Watson wouldn't do further damage if he wore a brace, so with a chance to live out the scene he imagined months earlier, he chose to play. “I wanted to finish strong,” says Watson, who completed 14 of 19 passes for 269 yards and two touchdowns in a 35–17 win, Clemson's first against the Gamecocks since 2008.

After Watson had surgery, he spent the next nine months reassuring everyone that he was not as fragile as his freshman year suggested. Still, Clemson coaches want Watson to drive the car, not be the car. “We tell Deshaun he's got a talented cast around him,” Scott says. “He doesn't have to make every play.”

But Watson can do that, and he knows it. So when the Tigers need heroics, Watson will be ready to make those plays. □

## Joint Return

Candidates for SI's All-ACL team

BY COLIN BECHT



**Bralon Addison**  
WR, Oregon

Addison has reestablished himself as a threat with 13 catches for 185 yards in three games, along

with a scintillating 81-yard punt return for a TD against Michigan State.



**Chuckie Keeton**  
QB, Utah State

After injuring his left knee in consecutive seasons, Keeton received an extra year of eligibility. He's using it

well, throwing for 537 yards and two TDs in three games and running for another 75.



**Michael Rose-Ivey**  
LB, Nebraska

His 66 tackles in 2013 set a school freshman record. After serving a one-

game suspension for violating team rules, he has racked up 14 tackles in two starts, including a team-high 10 against South Alabama.



**Dwayne Thomas**  
DB, LSU

Since LSU lost star safety Jalen Mills to a fractured fibula, Thomas has helped shore up the secondary

with 11 tackles and a pass defended for the 2–0 Tigers.



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MLB

# THE MA

## SKY'S THE LIMIT

Correa is hitting .273/.340/.493 with 18 home runs in just over half a season, while thriving at shortstop—a rare combination he has worked ceaselessly to achieve.





CARLOS CORREA IS BARELY OLD  
ENOUGH TO DRINK, BUT HE ARRIVED  
IN HOUSTON AS A FINISHED PRODUCT.

HE'S ALWAYS BEEN DETERMINED  
TO BE A STAR—AND TO PUT PUERTO  
RICAN BASEBALL BACK ON THE MAP

# IDE MAN

BY BEN REITER

Photograph by  
John Williamson/MLB Photos/Getty Images

**C**ARLOS CORREA is the owner of 15 fedoras. They reside with him in precisely the type of apartment one might imagine a 20-year-old who has already become baseball's best shortstop would call home. It is a two-bedroom on the penthouse level of a Houston high rise, with an open floor plan, exposed concrete ceilings and immaculate modern furniture. If not for a few personal touches, like a trophy on a sideboard that reads JUNE 2015 ROOKIE OF THE MONTH, it could be a suite in a hotel catering to clients who like bottle service and electronic dance music. His walk-in closet overflows with size 13 shoes—he has every model of Yeezy, the Kanye West–designed sneakers that go for thousands on eBay—in addition to suits and other designer clothes. “I love going shopping,” he says.

When Correa first viewed the apartment, not long after the Astros called him up from the minors on June 7, the real estate agent pointed out that it had a view of Minute Maid Park from each of its floor-to-ceiling windows, and then added, strangely, that if Correa saw that the park was engulfed in flames, he would know not to go in that day. Correa rented the place anyway. “I wake up every single day, look over there and am like, Let’s get to work,” Correa says.

Correa’s schedule is always the same when the Astros are at home. He rises at 11; he watches something on the enormous TV that dominates his living room (*The Walking Dead*, *The Blacklist*, anything starring Kevin Hart); he drives his white BMW M5 to the ballpark, where he spends the next 10 to 12 hours; he returns home and is asleep by two. He does not, he says, indulge in any sort of a nightlife, and he does not understand why virtually every day for most of the season at least one person—a member of the media, a fan—pointed out to him that he could not yet legally buy a beer, which was the case until Sept. 22. “Never drank a beer before,” he says. “I’ve had wine and champagne, but never a beer. I don’t think that will happen. I don’t know why people look forward to that.”

Maybe the focus on beer is a way for people to attempt to connect their own

life experiences with Correa's. For many, reaching drinking age represents a significant early accomplishment. Almost no one, though, ever reaches the status in any field that Correa already has in baseball. He is a phenom, a prodigy who continually exceeds lofty expectations.

The Astros recognized Correa's gifts earlier than most. In his first draft as the club's GM, in 2012, Jeff Luhnow made Correa the surprise No. 1 overall pick. Even so, on the eve of the shortstop's promotion to the majors, one member of Houston's analytically inclined front office—considering that Correa was about to become the game's youngest everyday player, and at an exceedingly demanding position—predicted that he would bat .250 over the rest of the season, with eight home runs and 10 steals, and provide an unlikely contender with a modest boost.

Correa hit his eighth homer in his 34th game and stole his 10th base in his 57th. By his 87th, on Sunday, he was batting .273, with 18 homers, 12 steals and a Wins Above Replacement—a Corraean WAR, if you will—of 3.2. Just 30 hitters have ever had a better season's WAR at so young an age, and each of them appeared in at least 26 more games than Correa has so far. The list includes 15 Hall of Famers and many others for whom a bronze plaque is not hard to imagine: Adrian Beltre, Ken Griffey Jr., Bryce Harper, Manny Machado, Alex Rodriguez and Mike Trout. Luhnow has guided his organization from laughingstock to playoff position over the last four seasons in part by following a strictly probabilistic model, so you know he is not exaggerating when he says that Correa's play so far falls into the 99th percentile of expected outcomes.

Despite his youth, Correa has never seemed to his teammates like a kid with his father's briefcase, attempting to project the appearance of maturity. His enthusiastic but focused demeanor is, they say, genuine. Early this season, while Correa was still in Triple A, Jose Altuve, the team's veteran second baseman, wrote Correa's name on a piece of athletic tape and affixed it over the empty locker next to his, as a faux nameplate. "I wanted him here," Altuve says. "I was saving his locker."

Correa (along with many of his shoes) now inhabits the locker, as he will for years to come. "I think he's the best player in this clubhouse, on the team," says Altuve, a three-time All-Star and last year's AL batting champion. Correa has earned even higher compliments as the industry attempts to contextualize him; the most frequent comp is that he is a combination of Alex Rodriguez, due to his size (6' 4") and skill set, and of Derek Jeter, due to his natural unflappability. Such a comparison doesn't faze him—one sign that it might be accurate. "Oh, it's really humbling to listen to all the good stuff that people say about me," he says, smiling. "No, no pressure at all."

Watching Correa play can be startling, not because of any one skill in particular, but because he presents an amalgamation of attributes that don't seem as if they ought to go together. He is like a baseball gryphon. Players who hit with as much power as he does aren't supposed to also play shortstop, but there he is; shortstops who are 6' 4" aren't supposed to also play the position *well*, but he does, thanks to his lithe frame and an arm that has been clocked at 97 mph. And 20-year-old shortstops aren't supposed to have the awareness or poise to do what he did on July 25. With two outs in the bottom of the ninth of a tie game against the Royals and a runner on third, fleet-footed Kansas City outfielder



## CORREA IS LIK

### ★ TOTAL PACKAGE

Correa's mixture of power, speed, athleticism and level-headed confidence has made him the poster boy for the Astros' franchise renaissance.

Alex Rios hit a bouncing grounder toward the hole between short and third that seemed a certain game-winner. Correa darted to his right, backhanded the ball and, in one motion—and with his momentum carrying him onto the leftfield grass—he leaped in the air and threw a rope to first, beating Rios by half a step. If that play reminds you of someone else when he was in his prime, you aren't alone. "When I made that play, obviously Jeter came to my mind," Correa says.

"You can't have enough versions of him around," says his manager, A.J. Hinch. "If you find another one, send him our way."

In many ways, Correa's story is the archetypal one of a golden boy whose gifts carried him from modest beginnings—he spent a teenage summer helping his father build parts of their house in Santa Isabel, Puerto Rico, cinder block by cinder block—to, literally, a penthouse. "The talent is so easy to



see,” says Jed Lowrie, who began the season as the Astros’ shortstop and is now their third baseman. But it wasn’t always—and anyway, the talent was only one ingredient in the improbable alchemy that produced him.

**O**N THE Friday morning before Labor Day weekend the living area of Correa’s apartment was filled with people, waiting beneath that exposed concrete ceiling for him to wake up. Frankie Higginbotham, a 48-year-old former minor leaguer who has become Correa’s marketing manager and off-field swami—he lives in the apartment’s second bedroom most of the time—was there with his wife. So was Correa’s family, who visit from Puerto Rico often: his father, Carlos Sr.; his mother, Sandybel; his then 16-year-old brother, Jean

until 10:30 every evening—always six days a week, sometimes seven—starting when his older son was in elementary school, Carlos Sr. would take him out to a local field and run him through baseball drills. Neighbors would reprimand him through their car windows. “They would be like, ‘That’s too much for a little kid!’” Carlos Jr. recalls. “Seven years old, eight years old, I’m taking hundreds of grounders and hundreds of swings.”

What they didn’t know was that the son wanted to be out there as badly as the father. Once Correa started playing baseball at five, ceaselessly flinging a ball at a wall even after bad caroms off tree roots blackened his eyes, the game was just about all he desired.



Still, Correa’s father did push him. Baseball provided a glimmer of hope for the type of life that had been closed off to him from an early age. Carlos Sr. went to work at 13. When he was 16 and Sandybel was 14, they got married, believing their futures to be determined: He was going to be a construction worker, and he

## E A BASEBALL GRYPHON:



Carlos; and his seven-year-old sister, Leiby-sand. They had come a long way.

People in Santa Isabel, a municipality of about 22,000 on Puerto Rico’s southern coast, used to call Carlos Sr. “24/7,” for the way he labored to support his family. His first construction shift began at 4:30 each morning. Then, for six hours in the middle of the day, he would work maintenance for the town’s parks and recreation department. After that, another construction shift.

What Carlos Sr. did at night, though, earned him another nickname, one that wasn’t quite so admiring: Hitler. From 8:30

## PART JETER, PART A-ROD

was going to support her, no matter what. Two years later they had Carlos Jr.

“My parents taught me about the mistakes that they made,” Correa says. “At the end of the day, it worked out pretty good for them, but it doesn’t work out for most people. My dad never treated me like a little boy. He wanted me to be like him: a man at a young age who could go out and work for his family.”

Carlos Sr. himself knew next to nothing about baseball. He had attended three practices when he was young, but he did not know how to field a ground ball. He had worked as a fisherman as a boy, and he would try to pick up grounders the same way he plucked crabs out of a river: with his palm down. The coaches would hit him balls in order to laugh at him, so he quit. When his son first played Little League—called Pampers League, in Puerto Rico—Carlos Sr. would listen closely to the coaches’ instructions, and give the same ones during his nightly one-on-one sessions. He also studied the techniques of major leaguers. “He wanted me to do what they were doing on TV,” says Correa. “Jeter, A-Rod, those guys playing shortstop.”

Correa wanted to emulate them in other ways as well. When he was eight he asked his parents, neither of whom speak English, to enroll him in a bilingual Baptist school. “I’m watching interviews on TV, and I would see the Latin guys with translators and stuff like that,” he says. “I’m like, ‘Dad, I don’t want to be one of those guys. I want to speak for myself.’”

By the time he reached high school, Correa had become one of the island’s best young players, and he earned a scholarship to the Puerto Rico Baseball Academy and High School, founded in Gurabo by former major league pitcher Edwin Correa (no relation) in 2001. Carlos Jr.’s working hours began to rival those of his exhausted father. His days began at 5 a.m., and at night, without

fail, he went to the ballpark to drill. People still came out to watch him, but now, instead of lobbing insults at Carlos Sr., they would cheer when his son crushed ball after ball. Professional scouts would watch too, more of them each year, but still Correa had doubters.

“People in high school, they were like, ‘Oh, you’re crazy, you’re working too much,’” Correa says. “I said, ‘I’m going to be a first-rounder.’ They would laugh at me. They would invite me to parties. ‘No, I’m working, because I want to be a first-rounder.’ Never went to one.”

Correa and his family had deprived themselves of so much—sleep and social opportunities were just the start of it—to give him the best possible shot of reaching his dream. Still, as he entered his senior year, there remained a real chance that professional baseball would take little notice of him. That had less to do with anything that he did than the place where he had done it.

**P**UERTO RICO was once a 110-mile-by-40-mile hotbed of major league talent. Hall of Famers Roberto Clemente, Orlando Cepeda and Roberto Alomar developed on the island, along with other stars like Pudge Rodriguez and Edgar Martinez. As recently as 2005, there were 34 Puerto Ricans on Opening Day rosters. By 2014 there were only 11, and only Carlos Beltran and Yadier Molina counted as genuine stars.



### ★ ON POINT

With the number of Puerto Rican players in the majors declining, Correa hopes his success will open eyes to the talent on his home island.

Many theories might explain the decline. One is that Puerto Rican children have an increasing number of options: Basketball, soccer and even volleyball have all grown popular, and as U.S. citizens, they can also more easily pursue traditional professions. Another oft-cited factor is the draft, with its strict age requirements and compensation structure, for which Major League Baseball made Puerto Ricans eligible in 1990. Suddenly the incentive of signing a big-money deal at 16 with a major league club was gone. What’s more, the average Puerto Rican draft prospect had less high-level competitive experience and less leverage than his mainland counterparts. After just 87 games, Correa already ranks 12th in career WAR among players drafted directly from the territory.

While the island-born Francisco Lindor and Javier Baez were selected back-to-back at eighth and ninth overall in 2011, both had previously moved to Florida. Before his senior year Correa received offers to do the same, to improve his exposure and draft stock. “I want to come out of Puerto Rico,” he said. “I want to show people it can be done from here.”

A young Cardinals scout named Mike Elias had been keeping tabs on Correa’s development. In October 2011, Correa traveled to Jupiter, Fla., to play in a tournament at the Cardinals’ and Marlins’ shared spring training facility, and Elias happened to see him hit an opposite-field line drive that never rose more than 10 or 15 feet off the ground but carried down the rightfield line and struck the foul

## TEXAS STRAN

### HOW KEY ADDITIONS AND A REVITALIZED PITCHING STAFF TURNED THE RANGERS’ SEASON AROUND

BY JOE SHEEHAN

**A** NY GOOD TV procedural gives you a peek at the culprit early in the show, leads you on to other suspects and then brings you back to the first guy at the end. Well, in *Law and Order: AL West*, the Rangers are emerging as the guy with the smirk, the too-cool demeanor and the basement filled with bodies.

Texas was written off before the season even started when the Rangers lost ace Yu Darvish to Tommy John surgery and infielder Jurickson Profar to shoulder surgery. After a 7-14 April in which the team hit .210 and scored just 3.6 runs per game, followed by a 19-11 May (5.3 runs per game) that briefly pushed them into contention, the Rangers drifted through the summer. They were under .500 and in third place in the West, seven games behind the division-leading Astros, at the July 31 trade deadline.

Instead of selling, though, general manager Jon Daniels went out and bolstered the pitching staff, which had a 6.22 ERA in July, with a dramatic pickup. The Cole Hamels trade—Daniels sent five prospects and reliever Matt Harrison to the Phillies to acquire the lefthander, who is signed through 2018—was seen as a move to solidify the Rangers’ rotation behind Darvish for the next few years. As it turned out, Hamels and other new additions joined hurlers Derek Holland and Martin Perez, both of whom came off the



# ANGERS



disabled list, to remake the staff and vault the Rangers to a 30-17 run and first place in the division.

The turnaround is all about improved run prevention. Globe Life Park is typically a nightmare for pitchers in August, with the Texas heat helping balls leave the yard in a hurry. This year, however, the Rangers had a 3.70 ERA that month, the second-best August their staff has had since the park opened in 1994. Hamels (*above*), with a 3.73 ERA as a Ranger, has been an upgrade on young starters Nick Martinez and Chi Chi Gonzalez, but he was just part of the solution. Lefty reliever Jake Diekmann, who came from Philadelphia with Hamels, has a 2.37 ERA in 21 appearances. Righty Sam Dyson, stolen from the Marlins at the deadline for two marginal prospects, has a 1.52 ERA and an unreal 78.5% ground-ball rate with Texas.

Emphasizing his power sinker, he has faced 91 batters since donning red and white and has allowed just five fly balls to the outfield. It's one thing to trade for a No. 2 starter using top prospects; it's another to find a solution to your bullpen issues languishing away on a bad team, then coach him into the best work of his life. Dyson's performance in Texas is a credit to the entire organization.

Diekmann and Dyson have also helped spread the workload in a pen that had thrown  $3\frac{2}{3}$  innings a game during that brutal July. All told, 40% of the team's innings since the trade deadline have come from pitchers who weren't there in July; that includes Holland, the 2011 World Series star who has come back from shoulder surgery to post a 4.75 ERA in eight starts. Those pitchers collectively have a 3.49 ERA in  $167\frac{2}{3}$  frames. Throw in Perez, the young lefty coming



Check out the Strike Zone podcast with Ted Keith and Steve Cannella each week for the latest baseball buzz and hot topics at [SI.com/podcasts](http://SI.com/podcasts)

back from Tommy John surgery who has a 3.62 ERA since Aug. 1, and the Rangers have half a new pitching staff. That's how a team that was 47-52 and coming off a 21-run thrashing by the Yankees eight weeks ago is now using the phrase *magic number*.

Even in their current configuration, the Rangers aren't quite a juggernaut. Despite the benefits of Globe Life, the team is just ninth in the AL in slugging and seventh in home runs. Advanced metrics that account for Texas's good hitters' park, such as Weighted Runs Created Plus (wRC+), see this as one of the league's bottom six offenses. Manager Jeff Banister has made some ugly trade-offs to inject offense, playing Joey Gallo and Mike Napoli in leftfield and Delino DeShields in center, sometimes giving the Rangers the worst outfield defense in the game. That's a weakness to watch, although it is mitigated by a rebuilt starting staff that gets a lot of ground balls.

The Rangers still don't stand up to the Astros over the course of the whole season. Texas hasn't even outscored its opponents, whereas Houston has done so by 92 runs; no team has made the playoffs while being outscored since the Diamondbacks did it in 2007, and just five have done it in a full season since the advent of divisional play in 1969. Only one of those, the '87 Twins, won the World Series. Where the Rangers have made up ground on the Astros is in head-to-head play, taking 12 of 16 games from their intrastate rivals, including the four-game sweep last week that flipped the division lead. With all due respect to the Angels, who were four games back after Sunday, one last matchup—Texas's three games this weekend in Houston—may well determine the division winner.

In their current configurations, these teams are dead even. Which on *Law and Order: AL West* is the best kind of dead.

pole for a home run. “I can’t remember ever seeing anyone doing that on a baseball field,” says Elias. “Not just a 17-year-old. Anyone.”

A few months later Elias followed Luhnow, his boss in the Cardinals’ scouting department, to Houston, and he couldn’t get Correa off his mind. He saw Correa as much as he could and checked in often with Joey Sola, the Astros’ Puerto Rico–based scout who puts 25,000 miles on his car each year, trying, mostly in vain, to find the island’s next star. Every time Elias or Sola saw Correa, he seemed to do something spectacular. “Mike, I’ve never seen a kid coming out of the island like this,” Sola reported.

By May 2012, a month before a draft in which the Astros would have the No. 1 overall pick, Elias had assigned Correa a 55 grade, on the 20 to 80 scale, for his ability to hit for contact, which projected to a .272 to .287 average in the majors; a 70 for power, which projected to 35 to 40 homers; and a flat 80 arm. “Graceful beast with large, rangy frame,” Elias wrote in his report. “Physical presence along the lines of ARod or Cal Ripken Jr.” Most insiders considered Correa a rising prospect, but not nearly a contender for the top pick—in part because of his home territory—yet Elias’s reports convinced Luhnow that he ought to watch him work out in person, and to meet him and his parents.

“He was not the safe pick, because he wasn’t at the top of most of the third-party lists,” says Luhnow. “But you never know if you’re going to get another chance to pick first, and you want a player that can have the highest possible impact. For us, that was him. We really felt the shortstop component of it gave Carlos the edge.”

Although the recommended slot bonus for the first pick was \$7.2 million, the Astros had made a predraft offer of \$4.8 million. They not only wanted Correa, they also wanted to save money in the newly instituted draft pool system to sign a later pick to an over-slot deal. (That pick, the 41st, turned out to be Lance McCullers Jr., the Tampa high schooler who now, as a rookie, is 5–6 with a 3.18 ERA.) Sandybel told her son that he ought to go to college—he had committed to Miami—rather than accept the deal. Carlos Sr., upon hearing his wife’s suggestion, asked for a wheelchair. “Do you know how much construction I’d have to do to get \$4.8 million?” Carlos Sr. reminded his son.

In the end, though, it was Correa’s decision. “I knew for sure that I was going sixth to the Cubs,” he says. “That slot value was \$3.2 million. When the Astros made the offer of \$4.8? With the chance to make history, as the first top pick out of Puerto Rico? It was a good deal. There was nothing to lose, when I came here from nothing.”

**CORREA’S GRADUATION** from the Puerto Rico Baseball Academy was scheduled for a few days after he signed his contract, but well before he’d seen a dollar from it. He was not only the school’s best player, but also its valedictorian. A family friend offered to take him shopping for a graduation suit, and Correa couldn’t stop looking at himself in the mirror of an Express



### ★ TWO FOR ONE

Correa, at 6’ 4”, and Altuve, at 5’ 5”, make an unusual—and unusually effective—double-play tandem.

in Puerto Rico, at the way the slim black outfit transformed him. “I was like, ‘Wow, I’m a professional,’” he says.

As he gazed into the mirror, Correa allowed himself to envision the years to come. How even though so many said he would soon grow too big to stick at shortstop, he would refuse to allow that to happen, and would follow a strict off-season diet to stay under

220 pounds, like a fighter perennially making weight. How he would give his autograph to most anyone who asked, with the same signature, quick and legible, that he had so often practiced in his school notebooks. And, yes, how he could soon afford to buy almost anything he and his family wanted, and all the shoes and the clothes that he had desired but never could have. *From now on*, Correa told himself, *I will look nice*.

At 11 a.m. on that Friday before Labor Day, Correa emerged from his bedroom to hugs and kisses from his awaiting family. In two hours he was due to leave for another evening at the ballpark, but first it was time for the Correas to enjoy each other. They joked and laughed, knowing that despite their sacrifices, there had never been a guarantee that this life would be theirs; no guarantee that all those nights ignoring their heckling neighbors would amount to anything; or that his disciplined childhood would only build his character, not destroy it.

“We think that Carlos has always had an angel watching over him,” said Sandybel, as her son disappeared into his bedroom. He re-emerged wearing Wayfarer-style sunglasses and jeans with elastic cuffs at the ankles, all the better to show off his sneakers, gold special-edition Adidas with metal toe caps, designed in honor of C3PO. His combination of talent, diligence and charisma had brought him this far. Now it was time to go to the ballpark—which was still standing, the penthouse’s view confirmed—to see where it would take him next. □





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# Hold Your Horses

BY GREG A. BEDARD

Photograph by  
**David E. Klutho** for  
Sports Illustrated





## THE STRAIN

What Manning's critics aren't seeing: He's being pressured a scary 30.4% of the time in 2015 and is on track for 56 sacks, nearly twice his career high.

# What's up with Peyton Manning?

Because, it seems, we can't wait to bury our sports icons, that question was still being asked of the NFL's No. 2 all-time passer even after his Broncos improved to 2–0 with a stunning 31–24 victory over the Chiefs at Arrowhead Stadium last Thursday night.

*Yeah, but he tossed a pick-six for the second week in a row.*

*He's still throwing ducks all over the place.*

*He should have been intercepted five more times.*

*Denver's winning in spite of him.*

Those concerns may indeed be proved valid. Eventually. But to jump to any conclusions at this point of the season is fundamentally unfair because it doesn't consider the circumstances, and they are significant.

Cynics like to suggest that Manning's early-season struggles—his 58.8 completion percentage, his mere three passing TDs and two interceptions, his 5.1 yards per attempt and 74.2 passer rating—are a continuation of his rough end to last season. Manning finished the final six games of 2014, including his terrible performance in a home playoff loss to the Colts, with a 59.7 completion percentage, six TDs, six INTs and a 78.0 passer rating. It's easy to make that connection, but it ignores the fact that Manning partially tore his right quadriceps late last season. I would argue, in fact, that his perceived decline started even earlier, with a lower-body injury in Week 7 against the Chargers. Manning never openly acknowledged the injury, but it's clear to me on film that late in the third quarter of that game he was bothered by an ailment that changed his mechanics. Before that game Manning was a leading MVP candidate. Unless he aged extraordinarily overnight, something else would have to explain his struggles. And two leg injuries might be a good place to start.

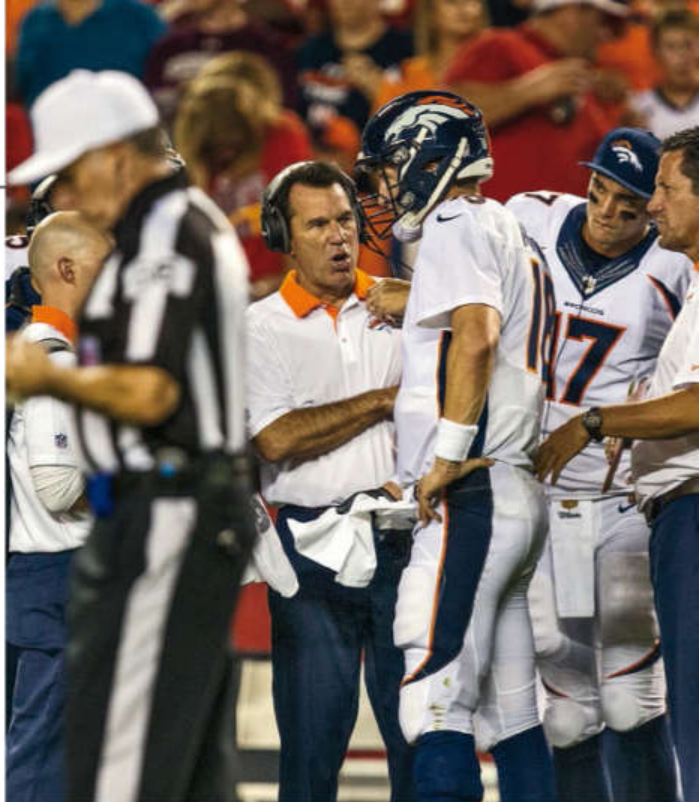
Manning's issues so far this season are more likely attributable to a combination of factors, unrelated to health, which have gone overlooked or ignored. For context, think back to what critics were saying about Tom Brady around this time last year, when his Patriots went into Kansas City in Week 4 and walked out victims of a 41–14 beatdown by the Chiefs. In that game Brady threw for a paltry 159 yards and tossed two interceptions, including a pick-six of his own. People believed Brady was washed up then too. And we all remember how that ended.

While Brady's and Manning's situations have their differences (Brady is 16 months younger, for starters, and may be a better athlete now than he was a decade ago), the similarities are worth noting: Critics of Manning, as they did with Brady, are overlooking several clear factors. It's not yet time to read Manning his last rites.

An aging QB gets buried prematurely—haven't we seen this before? Yes, **Peyton Manning** is struggling. But look past his age and you'll see other, more fixable factors in his pedestrian performance

**PUT ME IN (SHOTGUN), COACH**

If Manning (right, with Kubiak) can't live in the pocket, he needs help from his O-line, his receivers—and his own legs.



**W**HEN GARY KUBIAK replaced John Fox as the Broncos' coach last January, you didn't have to be fluent in the silent snap count to realize that he and Manning might not mesh easily. Both men are fixed in their ways.

Since becoming Denver's offensive coordinator in 1995, through his tenure as the Texans' head coach (2006–13) and his single season as the Ravens' offensive coordinator ('14), Kubiak has found the most success with nimble, strong-armed passers: John Elway, Jake Plummer, Matt Schaub and Joe Flacco. Those players were tailored to his system,

**1**

Kubiak prefers Manning start under center ...

**2**

... and confuse the D with misdirection ...

**3**

... before delivering the ball on the move.

**4**

But remember: Peyton can't catch the ball too.

a zone-running scheme that puts the quarterback under center so that play-action can get his receivers and tight ends open. One of Kubiak's key plays is the boot-action pass: The O-line and running back flow to one side, getting the defense to go with them, while the QB rolls out to the opposite side, choosing between multilevel targets who are sprinting past the crossed-up defenders. In general, he also prefers that his QBs not audible.

Manning is basically the anti-Kubiak quarterback. He prefers to operate from the shotgun, he loves to change plays on the fly, and at 39 he lacks the arm strength to throw on the move. (To be fair, he's not alone among QBs on this last point. I count Drew Brees, Eli Manning and Philip Rivers in that group.) Peyton has worked from a three-by-nine-foot telephone booth, directly behind center, for most of his career, but Kubiak prefers

that he now operate in a looser 15-by-9-foot area behind the line of scrimmage. In short, the coach is trying to reprogram 17 years of Manning mechanics.

After Manning's pick-six last Thursday the Broncos had the ball at the Chiefs' 19-yard line with 3:28 left in the first half. Denver ran play-action to the right and Manning rolled back to the left as two tight ends followed him from the opposite side of the formation. Virgil Green was wide open, perhaps for a touchdown, when Manning awkwardly shuffled his feet on the run and from the 28-yard line threw into the grass at the 13, right at Green's feet. Before Week 1 (when he had similar results), Manning had barely ever run that play. Should he have completed the pass? Yes—even with a rusher coming at him. But his misthrow shouldn't come as a surprise. Under Kubiak, Manning is like an award-winning ballroom dancer who's sud-

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denly being asked to win a break-dancing competition with just five months of prep. He may succeed—such are his skills and his competitiveness—but there will be slips and falls along the way.

For this arrangement to succeed, Kubiak and Manning will each have to tailor his mind-set to the other's. That can still work—and it doesn't necessarily entail shifting strictly to Manning's preferred shotgun. Earlier against the Chiefs, with two minutes left in the first quarter, Kubiak called play-action to the left. Manning curled back against the grain, some seven yards deep and to the right of center, crawled up the pocket and fired a perfect pass 48 yards in the air and in stride to Emmanuel Sanders (*left*). Chiefs safety Ron Parker knocked the ball away just as Sanders was controlling it.

It's that kind of throw—just like his pinpoint 22-yarder to Demaryius Thomas along the left hash mark late in the fourth quarter and, several plays later, his 19-yarder to Sanders for the game-tying score—that makes all of this talk about Manning's arm strength a bit ridiculous. Maybe his pass catchers (which no longer include Wes Welker or Julius Thomas) have to wait a split second longer for the ball, but, really, Manning hasn't had a great arm in years. His mind and his scheme are what set him apart.

Some pundits want to make a big deal out of the fact that Manning threw “deep” (15 yards or farther, by the NFL's measure) just 15 times in Denver's first two games. But consider: Last year the Broncos averaged 7.25 of those throws per game. In Manning's historic 2013 season it was 7.4. In 2012, 6.6. With Brady, whose arm no one has questioned, the Patriots averaged 6.3, 7.2 and 7.4 deep balls the past three seasons. In reality, NFL offenses years ago moved beyond passing attacks that rely on the deep ball. Today's game is about melding time, space and routes to get receivers open and putting them in position for big yards after the catch.

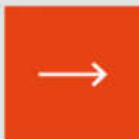
More concerning than Manning, his arm or his offensive system is a subpar offensive line. If the Broncos' pass protection and running game don't improve in a hurry (and they very well may; Denver's schedule gets much easier in the near future), Manning could get an arm transplant and be named his own offensive coordinator—and none of that would matter.

Arguably the most important factor in a passing game is the pressure a quarterback feels in the pocket. Under duress, any QB is going to be negatively impacted, but this is even more crucial for pocket passers—Manning, Brady, Brees. This is something I studied last year, when I believed Brady's critics were discounting the role that pressure (yielded by an ineffective line) had on him early in the season. When Brady was perceived to be struggling, his pressure percentages, according to

## Up—and a Miss!

*Is it time to kick kickers to the curb?*

BY ANDY BENOIT



When NFL owners voted in May to move the line of scrimmage for extra points back 13 yards, from the two-yard line to the 15, they were probably envisioning something like what we saw on Sunday in the Steelers' 43-18 blowout of the 49ers. Following Pittsburgh's third TD, coach Mike

Tomlin called on Josh Scobee for the extra point, but the 12th-year kicker dinked his attempt off the left upright. More important, after his team's first two TDs Tomlin had *not* called on Scobee, instead going for two. (The Steelers converted both.) Ultimately, three Pittsburgh touchdowns yielded a pair of successful two-point conversions and a missed kick. And the accumulation of those four points proved much more entertaining than three (practically unmissable) 19-yard PAT attempts ever could have.

Through Sunday, kickers missed nine PATs (including Zach Hocker's blocked try, *above*), converting on 143 of 152, or 94.1%. That's less successful than Weeks 1 and 2 last year, when kickers went 139 for 140 (99.3%). But it's not a *huge* change—which is why Tomlin's taste for two-point tries likely won't be adopted leaguewide in 2015. In that regard, two weeks into the season the decision to increase the degree of difficulty on the PAT feels like a half measure. The NFL wants to make kicking more challenging, which in theory makes that aspect of the game more interesting. But the end result the league should be pursuing isn't a fun-to-watch PAT. It's the minimization of the placekicking game altogether.

Think about it: The less kicking impacts a game, the better TV viewing becomes. Whatever replaces kicking—more fourth-down attempts, more two-point conversions—will undoubtedly feature marquee players: QBs, running backs and receivers going up against first-team defenses. And no matter how challenging kicking becomes, a mainstream O versus a mainstream D will always be a more intriguing matchup than a kicker against a special teams unit.

Take Scobee's missed PAT. On the TD that set up that play, viewers could readily see the physical skills that led to six points: Ben Roethlisberger's ability to pinpoint a deep ball, Darrius Heyward-Bey's speed and sticky hands. But could anyone readily tell what was behind Scobee's miss? A poor plant foot? The tilt of the hold? Let's be honest: Almost no one knows. What apparent physical trait, exactly, does the Colts' Adam Vinatieri possess that makes him the most accomplished kicker of his era? *Cricket*s.

For this reason, don't be surprised if the NFL keeps PAT kicks back at the 15-yard line—no matter how many misses pile up this season—and in the near future discourages any kind of kicking by narrowing the uprights. □

Pro Football Focus, were 41.7 in a loss to the Dolphins, 30.4 in a win over the Vikings, 33.3 in a narrow win over the Raiders and 28.0 in that loss to the Chiefs. (In my own study, including penalized plays, I had that last number closer to 42.) But he faced pressure more than 30% of the time just once (a two-point win over the Jets) in the next seven games, and the Patriots won all seven. The winning streak ended in Green Bay when the Packers pressured Brady 33.3% of the time. Similarly, as Brees's Saints started 2–4 last year, New Orleans allowed more than 30% pressure in three of the losses. In both wins they kept that number *under* 30%.

When the Broncos started 6–1 last season, with Manning tearing through defenses, he was pressured on 22.0% of his drop-backs. Through two games this season, though, that number is up to 30.4%, and he's on pace to be sacked 56 times, which would destroy his career high of 29, from 2001. That's untenable for an aging pocket quarterback, especially one used to (and perhaps spoiled by) superior protection. Since '08 he has been the league's best-protected starting QB.

When a passer feels pressure, he gets sped up in the pocket and he's more prone to mistakes. Both of Manning's interceptions this season have come with blitzers bearing down on him, but this isn't a new phenomenon for him. When the Broncos' record-setting 2013 offense went up against Seattle's formidable D in Super Bowl XLVIII, Manning was pressured on 38% of his snaps. Seattle came out 43–8 winners, buoyed by a Manning pick-six.

The great quarterbacks are measured by how they fare when things don't go perfectly. Perhaps Manning just isn't a great QB anymore. And that's O.K.; it doesn't mean he's done. You can win a Super Bowl without being an all-time great (see: Russell Wilson, Joe Flacco, Eli) as long as you play for a well-rounded team. And the Broncos look like they'll have the defense to contend for a championship. Under new coordinator Wade Phillips, that unit has forced a combined seven turnovers while making Flacco (with his 38.2 Week 1 passer rating) and Alex Smith (53.9) look like backups.

Still, unless the running game improves—which also has to do with the offensive line's struggles—Denver could have a tough go of it. And here the prospects are less hopeful. After losing franchise left tackle Ryan Clady to a left ACL tear in May, every member of this blocking unit has had issues, and the Broncos have averaged just 2.77 yards per carry and 65.0 per game. Last season those numbers were 4.03 and 111.6.

None of which is to say that early-season struggles foretell troubles down the line. Give credit to the two

defenses Denver has faced. Both the Ravens (who had Terrell Suggs through 3½ quarters against the Broncos) and the Chiefs were expected to be near the top of the NFL defensively this season, and they'll make life difficult for even the league's best quarterbacks and running games.

**T HIS MUCH** is true: Manning is no longer capable of putting up mind-boggling numbers like his record 55 touchdown passes of two seasons ago. Physically, he isn't quite at that level anymore. Manning has always been an anticipation thrower, meaning that in a split second he can compute his receiver's route, the defense's scheme and how the defense will react—then he throws early to a spot. That's one of the toughest



## Oh, 'Boys

*Two wins and two devastating injuries—what's the net effect on Dallas's playoff prospects?*

BY GREG A. BEDARD



You'd be hard-pressed to find an undefeated team that lost more in this season's first two games than the Cowboys. But it's worth asking: Even after receiver Dez Bryant (Week 1) and quarterback Tony Romo (in a 20–10 dismantling of the Eagles on Sunday) went down with

serious injuries—both Bryant's broken right foot and Romo's fractured left clavicle are expected to require roughly eight weeks of recovery—is this season really over for 2–0 Dallas, as some people are suggesting? Considering how the Cowboys' defense has played so far, and given the current state of the NFC East (not good), could Dallas realistically stay in playoff contention until their two stars return?

The answer starts with Brandon Weeden, who will step under center with Romo (*above*) out. The book on Weeden: He's 5–16 as a starter, although 15 of those losses came with the woeful Browns. In his one start as a Cowboy, a loss to the Cardinals in Week 9 of last season, when Arizona's defense was terrifying, Weeden





# Under Kubiak, Manning is like a ballroom dancer who's being asked to win a break-dancing competition.

things to do in this game, and he has long been the best at it. Now, with his physical tools waning—slightly, not hugely—Manning's decisions have to be even faster, more precise.

It remains to be seen whether he can sustain that for an entire season. I have my doubts that Manning can stay healthy at this age and with this line. I've also never been high on Manning's ability to shine in challenging weather or when the stakes are highest,

in the postseason. So it wouldn't come as a surprise if he ended this year—perhaps his last—with a whimper. In fact, if I had to wager on that, I would. But that's a separate discussion.

Right now? Like Brady last season, circumstances suggest he deserves our patience. And with a little injury luck, some improved line play and support on defense, he just could follow in his friend's footsteps and pick up another ring. □



completed 18 of 33 passes for 183 yards (40 coming on one screen pass) and one touchdown, which came with the Cowboys trailing by 18 late. He threw two interceptions and led the team to just one field goal in his first nine drives—and that was with Bryant in the lineup.

Weeden was much sharper in replacing Romo against the Eagles on Sunday, completing all seven of his attempts, for 73 yards, including a 42-yard touchdown to Terrance Williams. Still, many of his passes weren't terribly difficult.

The soon-to-be 32-year-old can make all the throws and has decent mobility, but his biggest weakness is that he has little feel for pressure and where it may be coming from, which leads to rushed throws and unnecessary hits in the pocket. In his mechanics, he takes longer than normal to release the ball, allowing sharp defenders to undercut his routes. That happened on both of his interceptions against the Cardinals last year.

## FALLEN STARS

Who needs Romo and Bryant when you play D like Dallas does?

In order to stay in the playoff race with a quarterback of this caliber, it would help if the Cowboys' running game got closer to the level it reached in 2014. So far this season Dallas has averaged just 3.4 yards per carry, tied for 26th in the league, compared with 4.6 last season, which was No. 3. If that doesn't happen, there's at least hope in coordinator Rod Marinelli's inspired defense, which has held Eli Manning (70.7 rating in Week 1) and Sam Bradford (65.6, Week 2) in check, and which has so far allowed all of two offensive TDs against two of last year's top 10 offenses. The Dallas D could get even better once end Greg Hardy and linebacker Rolando McClain (both suspended through Week 4) and end Randy Gregory (right-ankle sprain; expected back in October) return to the lineup.

With the Giants and the Eagles in disarray at 0-2, and with the 1-1 Redskins not a proven threat, it's conceivable that the Cowboys could win just two of their next eight games without Romo and Bryant, and still be in contention at 4-6, with only the Packers looking formidable in their final six games. Dallas figures to be the underdog in each of its next eight outings, save possibly against the Buccaneers, but this banged-up team should contend in every one of those, excepting matchups against the Patriots and the Seahawks.

The Cowboys may be stripped of their stars, but don't turn out the lights on this team just yet. □



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The tour kicked off in midseason form, invading Blacksburg, Va. to add even more excitement to a hotly anticipated contest between the Ohio State Buckeyes and the hometown Virginia Tech Hokies. The Buckeyes were bent on revenge after the Hokies marched into Columbus last season and took down the eventual national champions. Even though the Buckeyes came to Lane Stadium ranked No. 1 in the nation, many pundits picked VT to pull off another stunning upset.

In the first half, it looked like lightning would strike twice. The Buckeyes scored twice early, but the Hokies stormed back with 17 straight points and went into the locker room with a slim lead. In the third, OSU gained some separation with two more touchdowns, and took a lead they would not relinquish. VT scored again late, but it was in vain as OSU went on to win 42-24.

Off the field, the parking lot party was on. Virginia Tech legend and NFL Hall of Famer Bruce Smith gave a chalk talk at his alma mater, and interacted with fans who packed the Tailgate Tour for a chance to meet the Hokie great. VT fans took aim at the Virtual Quarterback Simulator, and snapped plenty of pics in the SI Cover photo booth.



Bruce Smith delighted Hokie Nation, while fans brought VT spirit to the cover of SI.



#### UPCOMING SCHEDULE

9/26 | UTAH @ OREGON  
(EUGENE, ORE.)

10/3 | ARIZONA STATE @  
UCLA (PASADENA, CALIF.)

10/17 | ALABAMA @ TEXAS  
A&M (COLLEGE STATION,  
TEXAS)

For Week 2, the Tailgate Tour left Virginia for the sprawling expanse of Spartan Stadium in East Lansing, Mich. With stars in the sky and on the field, the No. 7 Oregon Ducks flew into town to take on the No. 5 Michigan State Spartans. In a thrilling back-and-forth game between two title contenders, the Spartans held off a late Oregon surge to escape with a 31-28 win in front of a massive and raucous crowd. The win solidified MSU as a top contender in 2015.

#### COMING UP NEXT

Oregon fans will get another shot at playing cornhole and learning some new tailgate recipes, as the Tailgate Tour rolls

into Eugene, Ore. next. With their playoff chances very much in doubt, the Ducks take on their Pac-12 rival, Utah. The Ducks blew out the Utes last season, but this year's Utah team is much improved and continues to climb the AP Rankings. The Pac-12 title could very well be decided in this game, and Oregon will have former conference Offensive Player of the Year Dennis Dixon on hand to root for his old team. Dixon was under center for the Ducks' incredible 2007 season and will visit the Tailgate Tour to meet and greet fans before the game. It's official: The SI Tailgate Tour is the best pregame party in the nation.

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THAT IT HAS ENOUGH  
TOP TALENT TO GO TOE-  
TO-TOE WITH ALABAMA  
AND COME OUT ON  
TOP—AND STILL HAVE  
ROOM TO IMPROVE

*By Andy Staples*

Photograph by  
Michael Chang for Sports Illustrated

# TIDE, TURNED

## ▼▼▼ RICOCHET RARITY

The pass intended for Treadwell (above), caromed off the helmet of Fitzpatrick (29) and into the arms of Adeboyejo (8), who raced 66 yards for six.







#### OLE MISS COACH

Hugh Freeze kicked his brown leather boots onto his desk on Sunday afternoon and scrolled through his text messages until he found one from country singer Eric Church. Freeze has the numbers of some of Music Row's top draws in his phone, but it was Church who picked against the Rebels last Saturday morning and then spent the wee hours on Sunday celebrating with them in their locker room beneath Alabama's Bryant-Denny Stadium. Church had led the players in a Hotty Toddy cheer, and apparently the *flim flams*, *bim bams* and *by damns* had gotten him excited and. . .

"He said he's sorry for dropping that f-bomb," Freeze said, chuckling.

Church was only playing the percentages when he chose the Crimson Tide during ESPN's *College GameDay*. While the Rebels had won the meeting last October in Oxford, they hadn't had a victory at Tuscaloosa since 1988 and, in the 120-year history of the series, had never taken two straight. But in the Ole Miss locker room, at least, the optimism was palpable this time. Before he sent his players out on the field against the nation's No. 2 team, Freeze gave one of his shortest pregame speeches. "You can be just who you are," he told his team, "and it can be good enough."

There was a hint of magic in the air last season when the Crimson Tide came to Vaught-Hemingway Stadium. Pop star Katy Perry visited *GameDay* (and picked the Rebels, of course). The Grove, the tailgating mecca in the center of campus, buzzed with hope. Freeze remembers how all the questions began. *What if . . . ? Can we . . . ?* The answers turned out to be yes. Young men in pants with wild prints and young women in sundresses descended a six-foot wall, tore down the goalposts and marched them out of the stadium after the 23-17 upset. The story each



MARVIN GENTRY/USA TODAY SPORTS (2)



## FREEZE GAVE ONE OF HIS SHORTEST PREGAME SPEECHES: “YOU CAN BE JUST WHO YOU ARE, AND IT CAN BE GOOD ENOUGH.”

would tell would probably be better than the game.

There was no fairy dust needed at Bryant-Denny last Saturday night, only an Ole Miss team that took a three-hour bus ride, then went toe-to-toe for four-plus hours more against the SEC juggernaut that has won three national titles since coach Nick Saban arrived in 2007. *Can we?* was suddenly *We can*. The Rebels were hardly dominant in a 43–37 win that lifted them to 3–0 and No. 3 in the nation, up from 15th. They made dozens of mistakes. Open receivers were overlooked. Blocks were missed. Defenders weren’t conditioned to handle the 100 plays Alabama ran and spent most of the second half gasping as 6’ 3”, 242-pound junior tailback Derrick Henry battered at their lead, helping the Tide pile up 20 fourth-quarter points.

Despite those lapses Ole Miss got the win. That, more than anything, made the 45-year-old Freeze smile on Sunday. Preparing to meet with his team and dissect the Alabama game, he rubbed his hands together in anticipation of the times when he could pause, rewind and show yet another error. Sure, his Rebels had earned just their second victory in Tuscaloosa, but there were still so many ways they could improve.

This is why Freeze became, in the words of former Ole Miss assistant Wes McGriff, an “elephant hunter” on the recruiting trail after taking the job in December 2011. This is why receiver Laquon Treadwell, defensive tackle Robert Nkemdiche, offensive tackle Laremy Tunsil and a host of other top recruits signed in ’13. They wanted to make winning those *What if?* games routine. They wanted to topple Alabama not



because the stars aligned in the sky, but rather on the line of scrimmage. “I don’t have to design these fantastic pass routes,” Freeze says. “You just try to do something to get a guy in a one-on-one, and you feel like he’s going to win it 70% of the time.” The Rebels’ final touchdown—the 6’ 2” Treadwell leaping to grab the ball above the head of cornerback Cyrus Jones and take it into the end zone—was the embodiment of Freeze’s recruiting philosophy: Win enough one-on-one matchups and you’ll win the game. “We don’t have to bank on a bunch of crazy things happening,” Freeze says. “We’re good enough to go there and win. So it definitely felt different.”

**O**F COURSE, it didn’t hurt to have *one* crazy thing happen. Last season the Rebels suffered perhaps the cruelest twist of fate when Treadwell broke his left leg just before crossing the goal line, fumbling what would have been the game-winning touchdown against No. 4 Auburn on Nov. 1. Had the ball broken the plane, they would have won the SEC West title and controlled their playoff destiny. Instead, the injury cast a pall over the rest of the season. The scales may have been balanced, though, last Saturday, when sheer dumb luck turned a potential disaster into a touchdown.

Early in the second half, on a third-and-one from the Ole Miss 34, junior quarterback Chad Kelly figured that Treadwell would be covered one-on-one







out wide, where a broken tackle would mean big yardage. But Kelly did not figure that center Robert Conyers would fire a high snap, which bounced off Kelly's right hand and popped up into the air. Kelly caught the ball, turned and threw off one foot toward Treadwell—just as linebackers Reuben Foster and Reggie Ragland buried him. Stuck under 492 pounds of future NFL talent, Kelly didn't see his pass ricochet three yards off the helmet of Minkah Fitzpatrick, one of the two cornerbacks converging on Treadwell, and into the hands of receiver Quincy Adeboyejo, who pulled it in tight and sprinted into the end zone.

After he rose from the turf, Kelly did see Freeze beckon with a bent finger. Instead of celebrating the touchdown that made it 24–10, the quarterback went to the sideline. “Dude, congratulations,” Freeze told Kelly. “But let's don't do that again.” Kelly could only look up and offer his gratitude. “Thank you, God,” Kelly recalls thinking. “Thank you, Grandma.”

Besides never blindly throwing into double coverage again, Kelly & Co. have so many other tweaks to make. That is the key difference from last year, when Ole Miss played its best game to beat Alabama, then fell apart three weeks later at LSU. The Tigers, who visit on Nov. 21, will probably still be riding Leonard Fournette, the 6' 1", 230-pound sophomore who bludgeoned Auburn for 228 yards and three touchdowns on 19 carries last Saturday in a 45–21 win. Nkemdiche and the rest of the defensive line must get in better shape to handle

▼▼▼

#### FINISHING TOUCH

Adeboyejo's TD (bottom) made up for a bad break in 2014; now Freeze (top left) must give Nkemdiche (5) and the Rebels' D the help it needs.



a back who is as powerful as Henry but with a burst usually reserved for much smaller men. Freeze pledged to help Nkemdiche, who wrecked Alabama's offense for three quarters but struggled through the fourth. In the Rebels' first two wins he had played a total of 40 snaps; he was on the field for 78 last Saturday night.

The Ole Miss offensive line will have to retool even more quickly: Texas A&M defensive end Myles Garrett comes to Oxford on Oct. 24. The 6' 5", 262-pound Garrett is built like a comic book superhero and moves just about as quickly; the Aggies' early opponents have resorted to holding him and praying the officials don't throw a flag. And by the time No. 14 A&M arrives, the Rebels might know the fate of Tunsil, their All-SEC left tackle. The 6' 5", 305-pound junior has missed the first three games while the NCAA investigates whether he received benefits in violation of NCAA rules.

On Saturday, Fahn Cooper, who moved from right to left tackle to replace Tunsil, held his own against the country's best front seven. Offensive line coach Matt Luke's biggest concern was at right guard, where starter Justin Bell went down with a right-ankle injury in the first quarter and backup Rod Taylor injured his shoulder in the fourth. Jordan Sims, a redshirt freshman from nearby Homewood, Ala., played his first road game and his first conference game in front of 101,821 Tide fans. Late in the fourth quarter Luke couldn't afford to worry that he had a true freshman (left guard Javon Patterson) and two redshirt freshmen (Sims and right tackle Sean Rawlings) trying to salt away the game against a defensive line that's usually unyielding on between-the-tackles runs. “I just wanted to get the first down,” Luke says.

**A**FTERWARD, LUKE had time to savor the fact that his unit helped beat Alabama without its top player. A lifelong Ole Miss fan, he has a different perspective on the win. He grew up in Gulfport, Miss. Luke's father, Tommy, played defensive back for the Rebels in the 1960s. Matt's brother, Tom, was a Rebels quarterback from 1989 to '91. Matt played center for Ole Miss in the late '90s. “Looking at it as a coach, there's so much we can build for this season,” Luke says. “You don't want to think about history and all that stuff. You just want to think about getting better for next week. But the fan in me is so proud to bring this to Rebel Nation, to put a product on the field that they're proud of.”

Luke the coach and Luke the fan stood in that locker room last Saturday night as the Rebels rocked out to one of Church's hits. The song was “The Outsiders,” but they had just played as if they were already members of the SEC's—and possibly the nation's—upper crust. □







## **SPECIAL REPORT**

**WHY DO COLLEGE COACHES  
CONTINUE TO YELL, DEMEAN AND  
DEMORALIZE? THAT'S YESTERDAY'S  
TACTIC. TODAY'S ATHLETES CAN'T-  
AND WON'T-TAKE IT. WHAT'S MORE,  
IT DOESN'T WORK: STUDY AFTER  
STUDY SHOWS THE BENEFITS OF A  
MORE POSITIVE APPROACH**

# **ABUSE OF POWER**

**BY ALEXANDER WOLFF  
WITH REPORTING BY LAUREN SHUTE**

Illustration by  
**John Ritter** for Sports Illustrated



**JUST HOW** thoroughly Simon Cvijanovic once identified as an Illinois football player sits right there in his Twitter handle. And it was on that social media platform, in a series of tweets in May, that the former offensive tackle known as @IlliniSi documented how he had allegedly been abused, and thereby emphatically put on notice a college sports establishment where power has long tilted toward coaches at players' expense.

Cvijanovic, a senior starter from Cleveland, charged that third-year coach Tim Beckman pressured him to play with knee and shoulder injuries. Cvijanovic resisted, which he says prompted Beckman to ridicule him by forcing him to watch practice while dressed in an opposing team's uniform. Further, he claimed that Beckman concealed from him the extent of his injuries. "If I'm hurt, I'm hurt," he tweeted. "I don't need to be called a pussy to make me make bad decisions for my body."

Was this a cri de coeur or sour grapes from someone who had quit the team late in the 2014 season? Athletic director Mike Thomas first called Cvijanovic's outburst a "personal attack" on Beckman, and a core of Illini players sided publicly with their coach. But then the script flipped. Andrew Weber, a former kicker at Toledo, where Beckman coached before coming to Champaign, weighed in with a tweet of his own: "We had the exact same issues. Thanks for standing up!" The *Daily Illini* and the *Chicago Tribune* found more players who told stories similar to Cvijanovic's, with the *Tribune* reporting that six other Illini alleged Beckman would threaten to take scholarships away from injured players. Chancellor Phyllis Wise retained an outside law firm to investigate, and in late August, a week before the team's opener, Thomas cited preliminary findings that broadly supported Cvijanovic's claims in announcing Beckman's dismissal. "The university decided to follow the adage 'ready, shoot, aim' in terminating coach Beckman before its own investigation

was close to complete,” Bruce Braun, a Chicago litigator retained by the former Illinois coach, told SI. “Its alleged preliminary findings are entirely baseless and devoid of merit.”

College sports has a long tradition of coaches orchestrating valorous suffering. Football teams such as Bear Bryant’s 1954 Texas A&M Junction Boys and Charlie Bradshaw’s ’62 Thin Thirty at Kentucky endured methods that would meet most modern tests of torture. But gauzy mythologizing of male bonding under abusive leadership has given way to broad outrage at incriminating video—of Indiana basketball coach Bob Knight going after guard Neil Reed’s jugular in ’97 and of Mike Rice pushing, throwing balls at and kicking his Rutgers basketball players between profane doses of antigay invective in 2013. Meanwhile, allegations of abusive coaching now surface frequently in nonrevenue sports, particularly those for women. Abuse may be occurring no more often than before, but it’s simply coming to light because more players, empowered by digital tools, are standing up for themselves.

The news bristles with allegations of abuse far from the public glare of Big Ten football. According to a 2013 Yahoo! Sports report, swimmers at Utah said they blacked out, went into convulsions and needed emergency treatment because of the tactics of former coach Greg Winslow, who allegedly ordered one Ute to swim underwater with PVC pipe strapped to his back and another to do so with a mesh bag over her head. (Winslow, who was placed on USA Swimming’s banned for life list last year for having had a sexual relationship with one of his underage club swimmers in 2007, did not respond to multiple requests from SI for comment.)

Yet today most abuse isn’t physical, but psychological or emotional, often directed at injured or sick players. Multiple players and a former assistant coach told Providence’s WJAR-TV in 2014 that, before Rhode Island chose not to renew her contract in May, softball coach Erin Layton often targeted injured or ill players, whom

she would threaten with comments like, “Don’t ever get sick again, or I’m going to kill you.” In response, some players say they developed ulcers or eating disorders or committed self-harm. “The school did conduct an investigation and found no basis for the charges,” says Layton, who didn’t want to address specific allegations because of guidelines governing medical confidentiality. “I always followed the instructions of the athletic trainer on staff. I can assure you that I’m not the person that story made me out to be.”

“I believe this is a cultural problem,” says Ramogi Huma, executive director of the National College Players Association, which often hears from abused athletes. “A lot of coaches, they were hollered at and abused when they were players.”

The problem is particularly acute in women’s basketball. Over the past 28 months at least seven Division I schools have investigated, suspended or parted ways with coaches in that sport following player complaints of mistreatment. Illinois bought out associate coach Mike Divilbiss after players and parents complained that Divilbiss and coach Matt Bollant verbally abused the players and fostered racial divisiveness. The school chose to retain Bollant following yet another outside investigation that, while finding no wrongdoing, included the coaches’ acknowledgment that their “coaching at times was too negative.” Seven former players refused to speak to investigators; they have filed a \$10 million civil suit that charges the school and coaches with fostering a racially hostile environment.

“I’m a really upbeat and energetic guy, and I want the program to be a reflection of me,” says Bollant, who doesn’t dispute the report’s conclusion that he and Divilbiss played the roles of “good cop, bad cop,” respectively, with things sometimes leaning “too far to the bad cop side.” He says he welcomes Thomas’s pledge to enact a formal code of conduct for Illini coaches and a protocol for athletes to lodge complaints. “They went through

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A CULTURAL PROBLEM,”  
SAYS HUMA. “A LOT  
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18,000 documents and watched film of every practice and game, so it’s pretty telling,” says Divilbiss, who’s pleased with the report’s findings. “You coach for 30 years, there are going to be people you connect with and people you don’t.”

We’ve come a long way from the days when abuse consisted of suicide sprints in 110° heat without water breaks. Boston University women’s basketball players going back nearly a decade told *The Boston Globe* and espnW.com of alleged psychological beatdowns behind the closed door of coach Kelly Greenberg’s office. There Greenberg would sit a player down, with a box of Kleenex to dry the tears that frequently spilled forth, and deliver her appraisals. Players reported hearing that they were “worthless,”



“too shy and backward to get anywhere in life,” and “never should have been born,” with the abuse sometimes veering into personal appearance. “The one-on-ones were never about basketball,” former Terriers guard Katie Poppe told SI. “It was about who I was, my personality, my relationship with my parents. I remember one time she printed out the definition of *sheepish*. She told me I needed to be sheepish. She said I needed to not speak a single word for the rest of the year in the locker room. That was how the meeting started—I wasn’t allowed to speak.”

As a starter or contributor, she says, “I wasn’t told what a miserable waste of life I was. But as soon as I got hurt, I was called into those meetings every day. As if I wasn’t upset enough about getting hurt.”

Greenberg, who resigned in April 2014, denies making those comments. “I come from parents who were both coaches. My 11 brothers and sisters all played basketball. That’s not how I treat people.” Greenberg told SI, “Unfortunately, I was never addressed with any of these problems. They went directly to the media, so it was out of my hands—out of my university’s hands. Coaching is a challenge these days.”

Huma says that when he gets calls from abused players, he advises them to seek counseling. “About half of them,” he says, “already have.”

**I**T’S NOT clear exactly when college athletes became less responsive to the bullying coach, though the diminishing NCAA basketball tournament success of Knight’s Indiana teams after 1994 provides a clue. Nor is it clear which factors led to this sea change. Perhaps the travel-team world of youth sports began to produce a young athlete who expects more support; maybe modern helicopter parents and their children are reluctant to loosen their bond so discipline can

be subcontracted out to coaches. But the evidence is clear: For its 2010 Growth, Opportunities, Aspirations and Learning of Students in College (GOALS) study, the NCAA gathered data from almost 20,000 college athletes. Paired with a contemporaneous American College Health Association (ACHA) assessment of almost 54,000 undergraduates, 7.5% of them varsity athletes, the results make explicit both the extent of abusive coaching and the fragility of the athletes being abused. In Division I,

31% of men’s basketball players and 22% of football players reported that a coach “puts me down in front of others,” according to the GOALS study, and only 39% of women’s basketball players strongly agreed that “my head coach can be trusted.”

Even more alarming, athletes have never been more psychologically vulnerable, reflecting a trend among all college students. The ACHA assessment found that 41% of athletes had “felt so depressed that it was difficult to function” and 52% had “felt overwhelming anxiety,” with the figures for women jumping to 45% and 59%, respectively. Further, 14% of athletes said they had “seriously considered suicide,” with 6% having attempted it. From Penn runner Madison Holleran and Ohio State

defensive lineman Kosta Karageorge, to Missouri swimmer Sasha Menu Courey and North Texas basketball player Ebony Jeter, recent athlete suicides have included victims of both genders and a broad range of backgrounds, academic settings and sports.

Poor mental health is even more common among college students who don’t play sports. But those ACHA figures are for athletes competing across all NCAA divisions; just as rule-breaking and low graduation rates are most problematic on Division I campuses, there are indications that mental health is worst where the stakes are highest and demands most intense. A 2013 Georgetown University Medical Center study asked 117 current and 163 former D-I athletes if they suffered from depression. Researchers expected the ex-athletes to be most susceptible, as they navigated the transition from the spotlight. Instead the study found depression to be more than twice as common among active athletes than those who had finished their college careers.

Since he arrived in January 2013 as the NCAA’s first chief medical officer, Dr. Brian Hainline has met with members of Student Athlete Advisory Committees on dozens of campuses. “Uniformly, they tell me they really hope we’ll address mental health,” he says. Hainline has made sure that the next GOALS survey, the results of which will be released in January, will capture even more data about athletes’ well-being, and by early next year he also expects to distribute a set of mental health best practices to schools in all three NCAA divisions. Most of those recommendations, he says, will be preventative—“how to get things right at the front end.” In November 2013, Hainline convened a three-day task force on mental health that included administrators, medical professionals, coaches, trainers and clinical social workers as well as athletes. “At some point during that task force,” he says, “everyone broke down.”

Hainline says his outreach efforts will address abusive coaching—to a point.

## GOING PUBLIC

When Cvijanovic (left) tweeted that Beckman (below) had bullied him, it led to an investigation that would cost the Illini coach his job.



"The NCAA isn't in a place to be a coaching certification body," he says. "But we are in a place to supply education. The reality is that not every coach is sensitive to the mental health issue. We want mental health to be as treatable as an ankle sprain."

He also knows that drawing up best practices isn't a solution. "Even if we get the knowledge out to 1,100 schools, as in any aspect of public health the most difficult challenge is getting what we know reliably implemented," says Hainline, who's trained as a neurologist. "But culturally, we're getting to a place of acceptance. I get the sense that talking about mental health is less of a taboo."

As a tennis player at Notre Dame during the 1970s, Hainline himself went through a bout of depression. He quit the team and lost his scholarship, but returned after a hiatus, winding up as the Irish's No. 1 singles player his senior year while paying his own way. "I came back to tennis on my own terms, not my coach's or my father's," he says. "There's a big difference between the athlete who's positively engaged and takes full ownership of his sport and one who's really playing for someone else."

Or as Jim Thompson, the founder of the Positive Coaching Alliance (PCA), a Bay Area-based group pledged to overthrowing the negative coaching paradigm, puts it, "It's hard to be driven when you're being driven."

**T**HE INSPIRATION for the PCA struck Thompson at Stanford Business School during a class on organizational behavior. His professor had introduced the concept of "threat rigidity"—the instinctive response of leaders, when in a tight spot, to become defensive, reactive and likely to revert to old, even discredited ways of doing things. Today, with trainers around the country and a trove of online resources, the PCA evangelizes for coaching rules of thumb like "demanding, not demeaning," and the "5-to-1 ratio": five instances of encouragement to every one

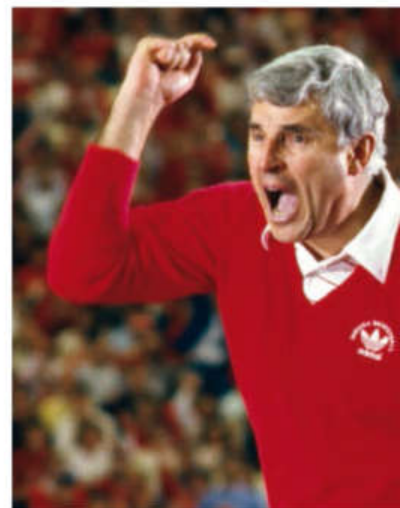
of criticism. "I have sympathy for coaches," Thompson says. "Especially at the college level, a coach knows that if he doesn't win he'll lose his job."

"But the best way to get the best out of athletes is to create a positive culture in which they're respected and believe in their value, and that the coach believes in them. The idea of the all-knowing coach who has lots of power and uses it in the way we now call bullying—that was kind of the norm. But all the research shows that it's not the way to get the best out of people."

Some of the most striking evidence comes from Dr. Barbara Fredrickson, the author of *Positivity* and a social psychologist who runs the Positive Emotions and Psychophysiology (PEP) Lab at North Carolina. "Negative emotions grab people's attention more," says Fredrickson, who attributes this to evolutionary reasons, because survival in the prehistoric environment often depended on sudden alerts. "So there's a perception that the best way to get what you want out of employees or players is by negativity or threats, or being stressful or intense. But in terms of bonding, loyalty, commitment to a team or a group and personal development over time, negativity doesn't work as well as positivity."

Fredrickson's research shows that positive emotions expand awareness, allowing for reception of a broader array of information. They make people more flexible, resilient and creative. A college-age athlete can be highly susceptible to the influence of coaches,

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THAT IT WILL HAPPEN AGAIN.**



parents and peers, and may not have fully developed what she calls "resilient emotional regulation," so abuse may leave a deeper scar on a young adult than an older one.

Two of her findings speak directly to the player-coach relationship. "Positive emotions are especially contagious," she says, "and a leader's positive emotions are more contagious than anyone else's." Her other insight comes as a result of eye-tracking analysis, brain imaging and behavioral studies, which together show that improved mood actually broadens the perceptual field. "People's peripheral vision expands," she says, "when they're experiencing positive emotions."

In other words, by yelling at his point guard for missing that wide-open teammate in the corner, a coach has probably ensured that it will happen again.

The brain is a work in progress, constantly shaped by the experiences around us. But the brains of young adults are particularly malleable. If young people tend to make unwise choices, it's partly because the prefrontal cortex isn't fully developed until after age 25. Meanwhile adversity and stress can impair neurogenesis, the process by which that ever-evolving brain produces new cells. According to Dr. Richard Davidson, who directs the Center for Investigating Healthy Minds at Wisconsin, "there's some



evidence to suggest that stress can impair the circuitry that regulates negative emotions in particular. So [abuse] can have this very pernicious effect, which can have a spiraling effect and lead to an increase in negative emotions as a consequence.”

Since the late 1990s, Dr. Ben Tepper of Ohio State’s Fisher College of Business has made abusive leadership in the workplace his specialty. He gathers data from such fields as manufacturing, health care, financial services, education and the military, and he is so renowned in his field that the NCAA has used his Abusive Supervision Scale, aka the Tepper Scale, in its GOALS report. Believing that the coach-athlete relationship is essentially a boss-employee arrangement by another name, Tepper overlaid GOALS results on to his own vocation-by-vocation data. What he saw left him slackjawed: Abusive leadership is two to three times as prevalent in college sports as in the orthodox workplace.

## OLD TRICKS

The negative approach used by Knight (left) didn’t work for Bollant (below) at Illinois; Poppe (bottom) says she suffered from harsh treatment at BU.



When he studies an industry, Tepper identifies what he calls “precursors in the environment” that make abuse more likely. “They’re all in sharp relief in college coaching,” he says. “Bosses under stress combined with targets who are weak and vulnerable and can’t fight back. Talent can give you some power, but it’s not like you can just say, ‘I’m leaving,’ because you have to sit out a year. The only protection an athlete has is to be an amazing performer.”

One other thing left Tepper astonished. “I’m trained as a psychologist, so my interest from the beginning has been in well-being,” he says. “And when I see the depression levels of young athletes—our best young people, physically and mentally, who have taken all the steps to get to a high level—that just throws me for a loop. To see them that vulnerable must mean the environment is overwhelming.”

Our conviction that hostility works is encouraged by a culture that makes legendary figures of Knight and Steve Jobs. Tepper believes that both succeeded in spite of their abusive leadership—that Knight was very tactically

smart, and Jobs had a rare combination of design sense and business acumen. “The studies all say there’s no incremental benefit to being hostile,” he says. “Even when you control for a leader’s experience and expertise, hostility always produces diminishing returns.”

The work of Tepper and others subverts more assumptions. Doesn’t a coach who yells convey urgency that helps players muster strength? In fact, he says, abuse is depleting: “We all have a finite amount of energy. You’re concerned with whether your coach will yell at you rather than doing your job, so it impairs your executive function. And bosses who combine hostility with support are more depleting, because you don’t know what’s coming next.”

Doesn’t a hostile coach create team cohesion? In fact, she’s more likely to create fault lines and cliques, which can lead to a downward spiral. “If you’re angered by your environment, it’s harder to come together with others in that environment,” Tepper says. “And it can create these weird rifts. At Illinois, you had a [football] player who felt violated, and other players who felt he needed to ‘man up.’ That can’t be good for team effectiveness.”

Tepper’s office sits steps from Ohio Stadium, where he knows the Buckeyes’ football

coaches raise their voices at practice. What little he has heard doesn’t alarm him: “There’s lots of yelling, but it’s more exhortative and attention-getting, not degrading. There’s a fine line, and you can teach it to people.”

**O**VER TIME, abusive coaching will become discredited as more evidence accumulates that it doesn’t work. But for now the struggle against bullies with clipboards comes down to power and who exercises it. For an athlete to speak up requires someone suddenly living on her own to defy an array of authority figures, perhaps break with teammates and be willing to jeopardize a scholarship that can be worth hundreds of thousands of dollars. If not for social media, the world would see Simon Cvijanovic as a has-been bitterly collecting his final credits at Illinois. Instead, Twitter allowed him to make his case and invite others to jump in and build it further. “There’s a little more rebellion against bullying coaches because athletes now feel they have a few more options,” Jim Thompson says. “If you don’t have any options, you don’t have any power.”

Ramogi Huma hopes the Illinois football and women’s basketball cases lead the NCAA to codify a baseline set of unacceptable behaviors. “A player should not be physically abused,” he says. “A coach should not use racially abusive language. If that’s universally defined as a starting point, a player could now say, Yes, something’s wrong with my coach. And that coach would be put on notice.”

Yet the problem may get worse before it gets better. One of the biggest successes in the crusade for athletes’ rights is the recent move by BCS schools to guarantee scholarships. As more colleges adopt that model, the coach who wants to get rid of a player can no longer simply refuse to renew a grant-in-aid at the end of the school year. Paradoxically and perversely, he or she will have only one tool left: Make life so miserable for those unwanted athletes that they leave of their own accord. □



## THE LONG VIEW

Already one of the league's renaissance men, Bosh has become even more thoughtful and reflective.



A photograph of Chris Bosh sitting on a stone ledge by the water. He is wearing a white shirt and dark shorts. The background shows a calm body of water and a clear sky. The title 'Happy Healthy' is overlaid in large white serif font.

# Happy Healthy

IT TOOK A NEAR-DEATH EXPERIENCE FOR CHRIS BOSH TO FULLY APPRECIATE HIS LIFE AS AN NBA STAR. NO LONGER TROUBLED BY THE BLOOD CLOTS THAT NEARLY ENDED HIS CAREER, THE REVITALIZED BIG MAN IS READY TO ONCE AGAIN BREATHE NEW LIFE INTO THE HEAT

**BY LEE JENKINS**

Photograph by Robert Beck for Sports Illustrated

# Chris Bosh

spent the worst week of his life lying in a bed at Baptist Hospital in Miami, listening to the slow drip of fluid leaking from his lungs and wondering if he'd ever be able to play basketball again. "Not be able to play, not be able to live," Bosh says. "It was that close. It was that serious." He lifts his T-shirt to reveal matching scars on his left side, where two tubes entered his body and ran up through his chest, sucking fluid from the pleural space surrounding his lungs. "I don't need any drugs," he mutters, parroting his initial message to the doctors. Then he tilts his head back and howls when he recalls the tubes jabbing at his insides. "Oh, God, no, give me the drugs right now!"

Six months have passed since Bosh left the hospital, and he sits at the dining room table of his off-season home in L.A.'s Santa Monica Mountains, high above Temescal Canyon, the Pacific Ocean sparkling like a sapphire beyond the infinity pool in the backyard. A giant inflatable flamingo is the only thing obstructing the view. The property is so remote that Bosh cannot even get a cellphone signal. "That's why I love it," he coos. He flips open a gray notebook, filled with sketches, journal entries and to-do lists, which helps the curious big man keep track of his many interests: guitar, Spanish, acting, coding, cooking, craft beer, world travel, neckties, trail hikes and old gyms.

The book was a handout at the NBA's technology summit, held over All-Star weekend in New York City last February. Bosh spoke at the conference and played in the game. "I was so foolish," he says. Throughout the previous month, starting with the Heat's road trip to L.A. in mid-January, Bosh experienced a strange sensation that most closely resembled a cramp in his left rib cage. There were times he glanced down at the skin and saw it trembling. "What the hell is this?" Bosh asked himself.

A test revealed an intercostal muscle tear, so he wore a heat pack when he slept. Then he convinced himself it was a back problem, so he visited a chiropractor. But teammates Dwyane Wade and Luol Deng were also ailing, with injuries easier to diagnose, so Bosh never sat out. He scored 34 points against the Pistons while struggling to breathe, and 32 against the Knicks while grimacing during timeouts.

One night, leaving American Airlines Arena, Miami coach Erik Spoelstra spotted his 6' 11" center leaning against the wall in the parking garage. "CB, are you all right?" Spoelstra asked.

"Yeah," Bosh replied, "I'm just catching my breath from that game."

How, Spoelstra wondered, could a rib issue affect a player's wind? After



***Bosh knew his season was over, but  
IF HIS CONDITION WAS LIKELY TO  
I couldn't play any more," he says.***

All-Star weekend Bosh took a short vacation to Haiti, spoiled by searing chest pains. He returned to Miami and checked into Baptist, where doctors finally diagnosed blood clots on one of his lungs, which most likely originated from a left-calf contusion two months earlier. When he shared the news with his wife, Adrienne, she did a quick Internet search on his condition. The first item that







## HARD MAN

Joke sessions with Wade (far left) and James aside, Bosh looked nothing like a “fake tough guy” last season.

knew his season was over, but he still had to wait for test results that would show whether his condition was hereditary, and therefore likely to recur. “If those tests came back positive,” the 31-year-old Bosh says, “I couldn’t play anymore. For almost a week I didn’t know.”

He told himself he would be fine regardless. He had his wife, his three children and his many passions. *I’ll get through it*, he thought. *There’s more to life than basketball*. Then, as the days wore on, he became less convinced. “There’s a reason all these guys who retire go crazy. It doesn’t matter how big your house is. You have to get out of there—coding isn’t doing the trick.” He watched Heat games on his iPad and yelled at the screen as if he were stationed on the back line. “Double him! Rotate! Get a stop!” He remembered the times he had complained about role changes, ankle tweaks, extra drills. “That’s all I could think about,” Bosh says. “I felt guilty.”

Pain distracted him from anxiety. Bosh was diagnosed with a pulmonary embolism, the blood clots that blocked the artery in his lung. But that blockage also caused lung tissue to die, a separate condition called pulmonary infarction. “Everyone thinks I just had the blood clots,” Bosh explains. “But the clots produced a severe adverse reaction, where all this fluid built up in my lungs, and it had to come out. That was the really miserable part.” He spent four days with the tubes in his chest, another day in surgery and another day hav-

ing a doctor insert a needle into the pleural space to drain excess fluid. “Doc, I really like you, but f--- this!” Bosh wailed, when he felt the needle. He was ordered to walk across his hospital room every day, and at first, he could barely sit up in bed. Then he grew more ambitious. “I can do it 10 times today!” he crowed before the agony made him reconsider. “No, that’s eight, I’m sitting down.”

Bosh is relentlessly cheerful, and he tried to act upbeat for the sake of family and friends. But when he saw a picture of himself in the hospital holding his one-year-old daughter, Dylan Skye, he nearly wept. The anguish was all over his face. “I tried to be a good sport, but sometimes I’d just lie in the bed and feel sorry for myself,” he recalls.

***he still had to wait for test results to tell***  
**RECUR. “IF THOSE TESTS CAME BACK POSITIVE,**  
***“For almost a week, I didn’t know.”***

popped up was an article about former Trail Blazers forward Jerome Kersey, who died the day before of a blood clot that traveled from his left calf to his lung.

For the first 36 hours in the hospital Bosh feared for his life, until doctors were able to assure him that the blood thinners they administered were working. For the next six days he feared for his career. Bosh already

# Chris Bosh

His father, Noel, searched for a silver lining: “You get to sit and think and reflect. When was that last time you did that?” Chris was stumped. “I don’t know if I’ve ever done that,” he replied. He tried to relax and fill his mind with everything besides the looming test results—memories of four straight NBA Finals runs, nights when Ray Allen couldn’t miss a shot or LeBron James made a pass that didn’t seem possible. “You think about so many things in that situation,” says Bosh. “Where have I been? Where do I want to go? *Who am I?*”

Now, six months after he walked out of the hospital, spurning the wheelchair that Heat security guards wanted him to use, he is asked if he came up with an answer to that last existential question. “Yeah,” he says, pounding a fist on the dining room table. “I’m a ballplayer, goddammit.”



**BOSH** has always been more than that, dating to his senior year at Lincoln High in Dallas, when he was not only a McDonald’s All-American but also a member of the National Honor Society, the Association of Minority Engineers and the Whiz Kids computer graphics club. Coach Paul Hewitt recruited him to Georgia Tech, dangling the university’s computer animation program as a carrot. He courted Bosh at the ABCD Camp in Teaneck, N.J. “You can’t talk to guys at those events, but you try to position yourself near them,” Hewitt says. “Most of them act all cool, like they don’t see you. My assistant and I posted up in a spot where we knew Chris would be. When he came by, he waved hello, and his buddies were like, No, no, put your hand down, act like they’re not there. He didn’t care. He still waved.”

After one year at Tech, Bosh was picked fourth by the Raptors in 2003, and over the next seven seasons he averaged more than 22 points and eight rebounds five times. He also took Spanish classes, which he stuck with, and piano lessons, which he gave up. “Think how good I could be if I kept at it,” Bosh laments. In the epic summer of ’10, he joined James and Wade on the smoky stage in Miami after their respective decisions, and almost immediately the arrows flew. Over the next four years Bosh switched positions, sacrificed touches and redefined what the NBA expects from its giants, while absorbing as many cheap shots as anybody in sports. Kevin Durant called him a fake tough guy. Shaquille O’Neal dubbed the Heat trio the “Big Two.” Scottie Pippen went with “two-and-a-half men.”



## SELFIE SICK

Bosh bussed his daughters at All-Star weekend; two weeks later he was in the hospital with his three-year-old son, Jackson.



***Asked if he came up with an answer to HIS EXISTENTIAL QUESTION, BOSH POUNDS a fist on the table. “Yeah,” he says. “I’M A BALLPLAYER, GODDAMMIT.”***

Spoelstra describes Bosh another way: “One of the most versatile bigs who has ever played.” Bosh evolved in lockstep with the league, from a back-to-the-basket power forward who snuck some breathers on defense into a three-point shooting center who watchdogs the rim and smothers the pick-and-roll. He altered everything but his personality, remaining the compassionate colossus who once knocked on Spoelstra’s hotel room door after a brutal playoff loss, holding two beers. “Just checking on you,” he said. Bosh talks candidly, feels deeply and laughs uproariously. He reached four consecutive Finals in Miami and earned championships in 2012 and ’13, but he nearly burned out in the process. “By the end, I



wanted to get off the ride,” he says, “It was going too fast. You feel almost trapped in your success. You’re like, Damn, I’m tired, I’m beat down, I need a break, but I want to keep winning. That’s when you start having those thoughts: I’m more than a basketball player.”

He escaped into his technology books, his acting aspirations, his tie company and his summer travel to Asia and Africa. Then, in July 2014, James returned to Cleveland and the ride careened in a totally different direction. “You’re wondering, What does this mean? What’s going to happen now?” says Bosh, who still re-signed with the Heat for five years and \$118 million almost immediately after James bailed. “You’re scrambling again, preparing for a new role, but you don’t know what it is yet. The stress level got super high. You want to win. You don’t want to average 22 and lose. I’ve done that already.”

Bosh scored 21.1 points per game last season, the most since his Toronto days, and the fake tough guy played a long stretch with a partially collapsed lung. The week after Bosh was released from the hospital, 35 Heat staffers showed up at his house in Miami, dropping off the 10,000 get-well cards they’d received. It took, as it sometimes does, a near catastrophe for a player to be reminded of his fans. “That’s true, but it was still nice,” Bosh says. “The multitude, for me, was intense.” He opened one card a day for two months, savoring messages much warmer than his old Twitter mentions.

On March 9, Bosh came to American Airlines Arena and asked Spoelstra if he could address the Heat before they played the Celtics. The team was six games under .500 and staggering to the finish. “I’m going to speak from the heart,” Bosh said. “I’ve sat where you guys sit, and when this game is taken

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away, you realize how important it is. All those things you take for granted—things like practice and shootaround—you'd do anything to get back." He scolded himself for ever wanting off the ride, for feeling trapped in the ultimate fun house. "This is what I was born to do," Bosh says. "I have this gift, and I'm lucky to have it. I want to do everything I can to maximize it."

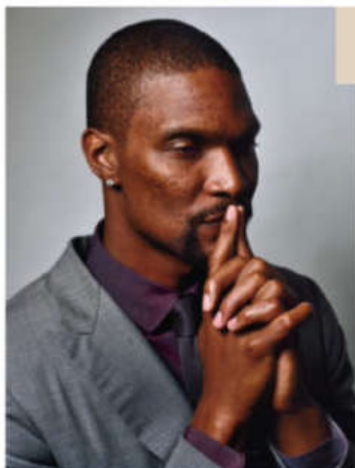
He will always be more than a basketball player. He took up the guitar five months ago, to compensate for quitting piano when he was 25, and he can strum a decent rendition of Lynyrd Skynyrd's "Simple Man." This summer he read Daniel Coyle's *The Little Book of Talent*, hiked Temescal Ridge for a clear shot of the Pacific coast and took his annual world tour, tweeting at Wade from what he said was the back of an alpaca. He was also cleared for contact and called Hewitt seeking advice on improving his stamina. When several Heat regulars visited L.A. in August, Bosh took them to one of his favorite spots, an auxiliary gym at Malibu High. "It gets nice and stuffy in there," Bosh says. "I like the backboard a little crooked, the nets a little stained. I don't want air-conditioning and smooth courts. I get enough of that."

The Heat, after a year spent recovering from shell shock, will unveil a formidable starting five when training camp opens on Sept. 29: Bosh, Wade, Deng, point guard Goran Dragic and center Hassan Whiteside. As Whiteside emerged last season, putting up 11.8 points, 10.0 rebounds and 2.6 blocks, Bosh sensed that his role would shift yet again. "That's O.K.," he says. "That's fine. I don't care if you have a role you're not comfortable with, or you're struggling to win games, or you think the world is against you, it's not that bad. That's how my mind-set has changed." He keeps a hospital photo of himself, with the tubes, on his phone. "The next time my teammates and I don't feel like talking on defense? *Nah, man, let's go, it ain't that bad.* Next time we lose four in a row? *Hey, man, let's get in the gym and have a good day, it ain't that bad.* It's never that bad. My life could have been over."

**KERSEY** died on Feb. 18 at age 52. Darryl Dawkins died on Aug. 27 at 58. Moses Malone died on Sept. 13 at 60. The causes varied—blood clots for Kersey, a heart attack for Dawkins, heart disease for Malone—but height was a common denominator. Kersey was 6' 7", Malone 6' 10", Dawkins 6' 11". It was a scary summer to be a big man. Superhuman size

did not seem like such a blessing anymore. Bosh looks at the number of big men with health problems and says, "There's a discussion we need to have about what we can do." According to Shirin Shafazand, a pulmonologist with the University of Miami Health System, tall people are no more prone to blood clots than anybody else. But professional athletes may be, since they regularly sustain injuries and take long

***"This is what I was born to do,"***  
**BOSH SAYS. "I HAVE THIS GIFT AND**  
***I'm lucky to have it. I want to do***  
**EVERYTHING I CAN TO MAXIMIZE IT."**



## AT PEACE

Bosh will have to take on a new role in Miami, but such matters no longer phase the 10-time All-Star.

flights immediately afterward. "If there's damage to the blood vessels, and then you sit on a plane for six hours without moving or staying hydrated, a clot can easily form," Shafazand says.

Bosh does not know for sure, but he believes his clot developed on a flight from Salt Lake City to Miami last December after he was kicked in the calf during a game against the Jazz. "I didn't wear my compression tights on the plane, which was my first mistake," Bosh says. His second mistake was declining to see a doctor when the pain moved from his leg to his rib. "You're trained to be tough, and you want to keep going for the team, so you kind of put your health to the side. From now on, I'm going to the doctor if I get a cold!"

He probably could not have prevented the embolism, but he might have been able to avoid the infarction, the fluid, the needle. But then he'd have missed out on the time. All that time sitting and listening and thinking about what it means to be a ballplayer, goddammit. □

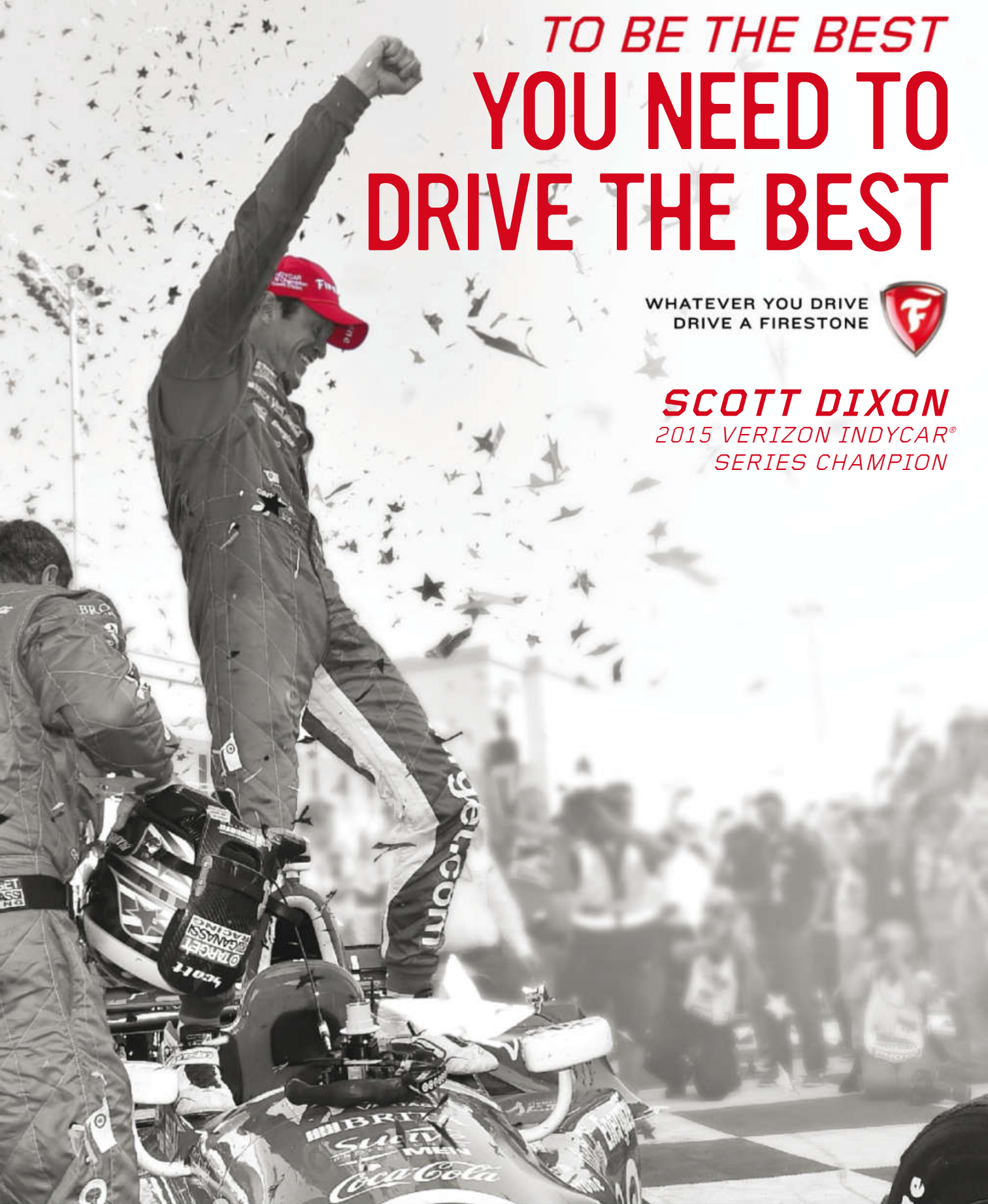


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# Mass Hysteria

→ BY STEVE RUSHIN

**TO THE LIST** of spiritual figures who have performed at Madison Square Garden—Zen master Phil Jackson, the Reverend Run of Run-DMC, Wizards guard God Shammgod—we may now add Pope Francis. When the world's most famous man visits the World's Most Famous Arena on Friday, the institutions will illuminate each other in a three-paneled dressing-room mirror of endlessly reflected glory.

Is it the Pope's celebratory motorcade through Manhattan that makes him resemble a sports star? The robust scalping market for tickets to see him? Or is it those rope-a-dope-pope bobbleheads in Philadelphia that feature the Holy Father wearing red boxing gloves, proving that the only two things still worthy of Roman numerals—now that Super Bowl 50 has dropped them—are popes and *Rocky* sequels?

Perhaps it's all the T-shirts that spell POPE in the Phillies' font of the 1970s, or the fact that popes and American sports champions both get specially commissioned rings and visit the White House, where we half expect Pope Francis to give President Obama a papal vestment with POTUS on the back.

More likely, it's all these things that cause us to see the Pope's Atlantic Division road swing through New York, Philadelphia and Washington in the idiom of sports. Sports are a metaphor for every facet of life—every presidential campaign is a horse race, every executive “moves the chains”—but religion was once the exception. Sure, sports have always looked like religion. Football, to take the most unapologetic example, has Hail Marys, an Immaculate Reception, Touchdown Jesus and the Voice of God, and many games end with a quarterback genuflecting as time expires.

But religion didn't always look like sports, even if the two share the same language of hope and redemption. When they used to say the *Sporting News* was the Bible of baseball, some countered that the Bible was the *Sporting News* of religion, and whether you value sports or religion more highly is probably evident in what you arrange your Sundays around. (Be honest: How many of you hear the word *miracle* and reflexively think *on ice*?)

It's appropriate, then, that the Pope is visiting Philadelphia, where former Phillies skipper and general manager Paul

Is it the  
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**him seem**  
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Owens was nicknamed the Pope for his resemblance to Pope Paul VI. Forty years later, the culture has shifted: Athletes and managers are no longer likened to popes, but popes are likened to athletes and managers.

“This new pope is like the Floyd Mayweather of popes,” the comedian Chris Rock tweeted when Pope Francis was finally elected. It may have seemed an inapt comparison. The boxer is fixated on wealth, this Pope is fixated on poverty. The boxer has dozens of supercars, the Pope swapped his Benz for a Hyundai. One has a 20,000-square-foot house, the other eschewed the papal palace for a small apartment. And while they both have roughly the same number of Twitter followers, only one of these men wears red shoes, and it is no longer the Pope.


But Rock was in fact complimenting the pontiff, essentially calling him the best pound-for-pound pope of our time. He is certainly a pope of the people, as well as other creatures, to judge by the Phillie Phanatic, who has revealed himself to be a religious phanatic too, holding in a furry green appendage the other day one of the promotional Pope Francis rookie cards that the team handed out last week.

Argentina's other most famous son, Diego Maradona, scorer of the infamous Hand of God goal at the 1986 World Cup, said, “The hand of God has given us an Argentine pope,” and soccer is the Pope's favorite sport. After his favorite team, the Buenos Aires club San Lorenzo, won the Argentine Primera Division in 2013, Francis received players at the Vatican and was given a jersey with FRANCISCO on the back. It makes sense that the most global of leaders emulates the most global of sports, for soccer and the pope are both invested in the biggest questions of all, including the practice of promotion and relegation. That is to say: Who is going up, and who will be sent down. □



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